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*Tolstóy and His Wife*

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LETTERS AND ESSAYS  
LIFE  
GENERAL INDEX  
BIBLIOGRAPHY

By  
COUNT LEV N. TOLSTÓY

Translated from the Original Russian  
and edited by  
PROFESSOR LEO WIENER



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# FIRST RECOLLECTIONS

1878





# FIRST RECOLLECTIONS

(From unpublished autobiographical notes.)

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HERE are my first recollections (which I am unable to put in order, as I do not know what was first and what later. Of some of them I do not even know whether they happened in a dream or in reality). I am tied; I want to straighten out my arms, and I cannot do so, and I cry and weep, and the cry is unpleasant to me; but I cannot stop. Somebody is bending over me, I do not know who. All this is in semidarkness. But I remember that there were two of them. My cry affects them: they are agitated by my cry, but they do not untie me, which I want them to do, and I cry louder still. It seems to them that that must be (that is, that I should be tied), whereas I know that it need not be, and I want to prove it to them, and I burst into an irrepressible cry, which disgusts me with myself. I feel the injustice and cruelty, not of men, because they take pity upon me, but of fate, and I feel pity for myself. I do not know and shall never know what it was: whether they swaddled me when I was a suckling babe, and I tried to get my arms free, or whether they swaddled me when I was more than a year old, to keep me from scratching off a scab; it may be that I have brought together a number of impressions, as is the case in a dream, but this much is sure, — it was my first

and most powerful impression of my life. And what I remember is not my cry, my sufferings, but the complication, the contradictoriness of my impression. I want freedom,—it does not hurt anybody, and I, who need strength, am weak, and they are strong.

Another impression is a joyous one. I am sitting in a trough, and I am surrounded by a not disagreeable odour of a substance with which my little body is rubbed. That must have been bran, no doubt, in the water of the trough; the novelty of the impression of the bran awoke me, and I for the first time observed and admired my little body with the visible ribs on my chest, and the smooth dark trough, the rolled-up sleeves of the nurse, the warm, steaming, bubbling, water, and its sound, and especially the sensation of softness in the wet edges of the trough, whenever I drew my hands over them. It is strange and terrible to think that from my birth to three years of age, during which time I nursed, was weaned, began to crawl, walk, and talk, I cannot find any other impression than these two, no matter how much I may rummage in my brain. When did I begin? When did I begin to live? Why is it pleasurable for me to represent myself then, and why has it been terrible, even as it is terrible to many, to represent myself at the time when I shall again enter into that condition of death, from which there will be no recollections expressible in words? Did I not live then, when I learned to look, hear, understand, talk, when I slept, sucked the breast, and kissed the breast, and laughed, and my mother was happy? I lived and lived blissfully. Was it not then that I acquired everything I now live by, and that I acquired so much, so rapidly, that in all my remaining life I have not acquired one-hundredth part of it? From the time I was five years old until now there is but one step. From birth until five years of age there is an enormous distance. From the germ to the new-born child there is an abyss.

And from non-existence to the germ there is not merely an abyss, but incomprehensibility. Not only are space and time and cause forms of reasoning, and not only does the essence of life exist outside these forms,—our whole life is a greater and ever greater submission of self to these forms and then again a liberation from them.

The next recollections refer to the time when I was four or five years old, but even these are few, and not one of them refers to the life outside the walls of the house. Up to five years of age Nature does not exist for me. Everything I remember takes place in my crib, in the nursery. Neither grass, nor leaves, nor sky, nor sun exist for me. It cannot be that I was not given flowers and leaves to play with, that I did not see any grass, that I was not protected against the sun, but up to my fifth or sixth year I have not a single recollection of what we call Nature. Evidently we have to get away from it, to see it, and I was Nature.

The next recollection after that of the trough is the recollection of Ereméevna. "Ereméevna" was a word with which they used to frighten us children. No doubt they had been doing so for a long time, but my recollection of it is this: I am in my crib, and I feel well and happy, as I always do, and I should not have remembered it, but suddenly my nurse or somebody of what constitutes my life speaks in a new voice and goes away, and I feel not only happy, but also frightened. I recall that I am not alone, but that there is somebody else like me. (This was, no doubt, my sister Máshenka, who was one year younger, and whose crib stood in the same room with mine.) I recall that there is a curtain near my bed, and sister and I rejoice and tremble at that unusual thing which has happened with us, and I hide myself in my pillow, and I hide myself and look at the door, through which I expect something new and merry to come. We laugh, and hide ourselves, and wait. And here there

appears some one in a skirt and a cap, as I never saw her before, but I recognize that she is the same who is always with me (my nurse or my aunt, I do not know which), and this some one says in a coarse voice, which I know, something terrible about bad children and about Ereméevna. I scream for terror and joy and seem to be both frightened and happy at feeling terribly, and I want her who frightens me not to know that I have recognized her. We grow silent, but later again begin on purpose to whisper to one another, in order to call Ereméevna back.

I have a similar recollection of Ereméevna, which, no doubt, belongs to a later time, because it is more distinct, though it has remained for ever inexplicable to me. In this recollection the chief part is played by the German Fédor Ivánovich, our teacher, but I know for certain that I am not yet under his supervision, — hence this takes place before I am five years old. This is my first impression of Fédor Ivánovich. It takes place so early that I do not yet remember any one, neither my brothers, nor my father, nor any one else. If I have any idea about some individual person, it is about my sister, and this only because she, like me, was afraid of Ereméevna. With this recollection there is united my first idea that there is an upper story to our house. How I got there, whether I went there myself, who carried me there, I do not remember about that, but I do remember that there are many of us, that we all hold each other's hands in a circle, that among these there are some strange women (for some reason I know that they are laundresses), and we all begin to whirl about and jump, and Fédor Ivánovich jumps, raising his legs too high and too noisily, and I feel at the same moment that this is not good and is immoral, and I take note of him, and, it seems to me, begin to weep, and everything is over.

This is all I remember up to my fifth year. I do not remember my nurses, aunts, brothers, sisters, or my father,

or the rooms, or my toys. My more definite recollections begin with the time when I was taken down-stairs to Fédor Ivánovich and the older boys.

As I was transferred down-stairs to Fédor Ivánovich and the boys, I experienced for the first time, and so more strongly than ever, the sensation which is called the sense of honour, the sense of the cross which each of us is called to bear. I felt sorry to give up what was habitual (habitual since eternity); I felt sorry, poetically sorry, not so much to part from people, from my sister, my nurse, my aunt, as from my crib, the curtain, the pillow, and I was afraid of the life into which I was entering. I tried to discover something jolly in the life which awaited me; I tried to believe in the kind words with which Fédor Ivánovich tried to entice me; I tried not to notice the contempt with which the boys received me, the younger boy; I tried to think that it was a disgrace for a big boy to live in the same room with girls and that there had been nothing nice in that life up-stairs with the nurse; but I felt frightfully sad, and I knew that I was irretrievably losing my innocence and happiness, and only the feeling of my own dignity, the consciousness that I was doing my duty, sustained my courage. Later in life I have frequently had occasion to experience such minutes on the cross-roads of life, when entering upon a new path. I used to experience calm grief at the irretrievableness of what is lost. I somehow could not believe that this would be. Though I had been told that I should be taken to the boys, I remember that the cloak with a belt sewed on the back, which they put on me, as it were for ever cut me off from up-stairs, and I now for the first time observed, not all the persons with whom I had been living, but only the chief person, whom I had paid no attention to before. This was aunty T—— A——. I remember her as tall, plump, black-haired, kindly, tender, compassionate. As she put on my cloak and fastened

the belt, she embraced me and kissed me, and I saw that she felt, like me, that it was a pity, a great pity, but that it had to be. For the first time I felt that life was not play, but hard work. Shall I not understand the same when I shall be dying? Shall I not understand that death, or the future life, is not play, but hard work?

*May 5, 1878.*

# CHURCH AND STATE

1882

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# CHURCH AND STATE

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FAITH is the meaning given to life; it is that which gives force and direction to life. Every living man finds this meaning and lives upon its basis. If he does not find it, he dies. In the search after it man makes use of everything worked out by humanity. All this which is worked out by humanity is called revelation. Revelation is what helps man to understand the meaning of life. Such is man's relation to faith.

What a remarkable thing! There appear men who do their level best to get people to make use of this, rather than of that, form of revelation; they cannot rest until others will accept their particular form of revelation; they curse, punish, kill all the dissenters they can reach. Others do the same: they curse, punish, kill all the dissenters they can reach. Others again do the same. And thus they all curse, punish, kill one another, each demanding that all should believe just like them. And it turns out that there are hundreds of faiths, and they all curse, punish, and kill one another.

At first I was startled and I marvelled how it was that such an obvious absurdity, such an obvious contradiction, did not destroy faith itself. How could believing people remain in this deception?

Indeed, from the general point of view it is incomprehensible, and it proves incontestably that every faith is a

deception and that all this is a superstition, as is proved by the now reigning philosophy. Looking from the general point of view, I, too, arrived incontestably at the recognition of this, that all faiths are human deceptions. But I could not help but stop at the reflection that the very stupidity of the deception, its obviousness, and yet the fact that all humanity submits to it, — that all that showed that at the base of this deception there was something which was not deceptive. Otherwise everything was so foolish that it was impossible to be deceived. Even the submission to the deception, a submission common to all humanity living a true life, made me recognize the importance of the phenomenon which served as a cause of the deception; and in consequence of this conviction I began to analyze the Christian teaching which served as a foundation for the deception of the whole of Christian humanity.

This was the result from the general point of view; but from the personal point of view, from the one in consequence of which every man and I, too, in order to live, must have faith in the meaning of life, and does have faith, — this phenomenon of violence in matters of faith is still more striking by its absurdity.

Indeed, how, why, for whom is it necessary that another should not only believe, but also profess his faith like myself? A man lives, consequently he knows the meaning of life. He has established his relation to God, he knows the truth of truths, and I know the truth of truths. Their expression may be different, the essence must be one and the same, — we are both men.

How, why, what can compel me to demand of any one that he shall express his truth precisely as I do?

I cannot compel a man to change his belief either by violence, or by cunning, or by deception (false miracles).

Faith is his life, — how then can I take his faith from him and give him another? It is the same as taking his

heart out of him and putting in another. I can do so only when his faith and mine are words, and not what he lives by, — an excrescence, and not a heart. This cannot be done for this reason also, that it is impossible to deceive a man or make a man believe in what he does not believe, impossible, because he who believes, that is, who has established his relations to God and so knows that faith is man's relation to God, cannot wish to establish the relation of another man to God by means of violence or deception. This is impossible, but it is done, has been done everywhere and at all times, that is, it could not be done, because it is impossible, but something has been done which resembles it very much; what has been done is this, that men foist upon others a semblance of faith, and the others accept this semblance of faith, that is, the deception of faith.

Faith cannot be foisted upon any one and cannot be accepted on account of anything: of violence, deception, or advantage; and so it is not faith, but a deception of faith. It is this deception of faith which is an old condition of the life of humanity.

In what does this deception consist and on what is it based? By what is it evoked for the deceivers, and by what does it maintain itself for the deceived? I will not speak of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, in which there were the same phenomena, not because it would be impossible to find the same here: to any one reading about these religions it will be clear that in these faiths the same happened as in Christianity; but I will speak exclusively of Christianity, as of a faith known, necessary, and dear to us. In Christianity the whole deception is built upon the fantastic conception of the church, which is based upon nothing and which from the beginning of the study of Christianity startles one by its unexpected and useless absurdity.

Among all the impious conceptions and words there is

not a conception or word more impious than the conception of the church. There is not a conception which has created more evil than the conception of the church. In reality the word means an assembly and nothing more, and is in this sense used in the gospels. In the languages of all the modern nations the word *ecclesia* signifies a house of prayer.

Beyond these meanings this word, in spite of the fifteen hundred years of the existence of the deception of the church, has not penetrated into any language. From the definitions given to this word by the priests who need the deception of the church it turns out that it is a preface which says: "Everything which I am going to say now is the truth, and if you do not believe it, I will have you burned, and will curse and in every way offend you." This conception is a sophism which is necessary for certain dialectical purposes, and it remains the possession of those who need it. This conception does not exist at all among the people, either among the masses, or in society and in the midst of cultured people, although it is taught in the catechisms. This definition — it is really a shame to have to analyze it, but it has to be done, because so many people give it out so seriously as something very important — is absolutely false. When it is said that the church is an assembly of true believers, nothing is really said (to say nothing of the fantastically dead), because, if I say that an orchestra is an assembly of all the true musicians, I have said nothing, if I do not say what I mean by true musicians. But according to theology it turns out that the true believers are those who follow the teaching of the church, that is, who are in the church.

To say nothing of the fact that there are hundreds of such true faiths, the definition does not say anything, and, it would seem, is as useless as the definition of the orchestra as an assembly of true musicians; but one im-

mediately sees the point of the ear behind all this. The church is true and one, and in it are the pastors and the flock; and the God-ordained pastors teach this true and one doctrine, that is: "Upon my word, everything we are going to say is the truth." There is nothing else. The whole deception is in this,—in the word and the conception of the church. And the meaning of this deception is only this, that there are people who are dreadfully anxious to teach their faith to others.

Why are they so anxious to teach their faith to other people? If they had the true faith, they would know that faith is the meaning of life, the relation to God, established by every man, and that, therefore, it is impossible to teach a faith, but only the deception of faith. But they want to teach. What for? The simplest answer would be that the pope needs cakes and eggs, the bishop—a palace, fish pie, silk vestments. But this answer is insufficient. Such, no doubt, was the inward, psychological impulse for the deception, an impulse which supported the deception; but, analyzing in this manner, how could one man (an executioner) have decided to kill another man, against whom he has no malice? It would be insufficient to say that the executioner kills, because he is given whiskey, a white loaf, and a red shirt; even so it would be insufficient to say that the Metropolitan of Kíev with his monks fills bags with hay, calling them saintly relics, only for the purpose of having an income of thirty thousand roubles. Both actions are too terrible and too contrary to human nature, for such a simple, coarse explanation to be sufficient. Both the executioner and the metropolitan will, in explaining their acts, adduce a whole series of proofs, the chief foundation of which will be historic tradition. "A man must be executed,—men have been executed ever since the beginning of the world. If not I, another will. I will do it, I hope, with God's aid, better than any one else!" Even so will the

metropolitan speak: "External worship is necessary, — saintly relics have been worshipped ever since the beginning of the world. People worship the relics of the Grottoes and have been coming here. If not I, another man will manage things here. I hope, with God's aid, to be able to put to better God-pleasing use the money obtained in a blasphemous manner."

To understand the deception of faith, it is necessary to go to its beginning and source.

We speak of what we know of Christianity. Turning to the beginning of the Christian teaching in the gospels, we find that the teaching directly excludes external divine worship, condemns it, and in particular clearly and positively denies every teachership. But since Christ's time and nearer to our own times, we find a departure of the doctrine from these foundations, as laid down by Christ. This departure begins with the times of the apostles and especially with Paul, the lover of the teachership; and the farther Christianity is spread, the more and more it deviates and adopts those very methods of external divine worship and teachership, the negation of which is so positively expressed by Christ. But in the first times of Christianity the conception of the church is used only as a representation of all those who share the belief which I regard as the true one. The conception is quite correct, so long as it does not include the expression of belief in words, but means the expression of it in one's whole life, since a belief cannot be expressed in words.

The concept of the true church was also used as an argument against dissenters. But previous to Emperor Constantine and the Nicene Council the church is only a concept. Since the time of Emperor Constantine and the Nicene Council the church has become an act, — an act of deception. That deception of the metropolitans with the relics, of the popes with the Eucharist, of

the Iberian Virgin, of the Synods, and so forth, deceptions which, for their monstrousness, startle and frighten us so, begin in nothing but the advantage of these persons. It is an old deception, and it did not begin with the advantages to individual persons merely; there does not exist a man so execrable as to have the courage to do so, if he were the first and if there were no other causes. The causes which led to it were bad. "By their fruit ye shall know them." The beginning was evil, — hatred, human pride, enmity against Arius and others; and another, a still greater evil, was the union of the Christians with the temporal power. The temporal power, Emperor Constantine, who according to the pagan conceptions stands upon the height of human greatness (he is counted among the gods), accepts Christianity, gives the whole nation an example, converts the people, and lends a helping hand against the heretics and by means of an ecumenical council established the one true Christian faith.

The Christian Catholic faith is established for ever. So natural it was to submit to this deception, and up to now people believe in the saving power of this event, whereas it was an event when the majority of Christians renounced their faith. Those were the cross-roads, where the vast majority of Christians took the pagan road on which they continue to travel until the present time. Charlemagne and Vladímir did the same.

And the deception of the church is continued until the present, a deception which consists in this, that the acceptance of Christianity by the temporal power is necessary for those who understand the letter and not the spirit of Christianity, because the acceptance of Christianity without the renunciation of power is a scoffing at Christianity and a corruption of it.

The sanctification of the power of state by Christianity is a blasphemy, a ruin of Christianity.

Having for fifteen hundred years lived under this blasphemous union of putative Christianity and the state, we have to make a great effort, in order to forget all the complex sophisms by means of which the whole teaching of Christ has for fifteen hundred years been everywhere distorted, so as to please the temporal power, to make its peace with the state, by trying to explain the sanctity of the state and its possibility of being Christian.

In reality the words "Christian state" are the same as the words "warm, hot ice." Either there is no state, or there is no Christianity.

To understand this clearly, it is necessary to forget all those fancies in which we are carefully educated, and to ask directly for the meaning of those historical and juridical sciences which we are taught. These sciences have no foundations at all; they are all nothing but an apology for violence.

We shall pass by the history of the Persians, Medes, and so forth, and shall take the history of the state which was the first to form a union with Christianity.

There was a robbers' den in Rome; it grew through rapine, violence, and murder; it conquered the nations. The robbers and their descendants, with their leaders, whom they now called Cæsar, now Augustus, at their head, robbed and tortured the nations for the gratification of their lusts. One of the heirs of these robber leaders, Constantine, who had read a lot of books and had grown weary of his lustful life, preferred certain dogmas of Christianity to his former beliefs, — he preferred the mass to the sacrificing of human victims, and the worship of the one God, with his Son Christ, to that of Apollo, Venus, and Zeus, and ordered this faith to be introduced among those whom he kept under his power.

"Kings rule over the nations, — not thus should it be among you: thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not have riches, thou shalt not



judge, thou shalt not condemn, suffer evil," — nobody told him all that.

All he was told was: "Do you want to be called a Christian and to remain a leader of robbers, — to beat, burn, wage war, fornicate, execute, live in luxury? You may."

And they arranged a Christianity for him, and they arranged it pleasantly, better than could have been expected. They foresaw that, if he read the Gospel, he might come to see that all that was demanded there was a Christian life, and not the rearing of temples and attendance in them. They foresaw this, and carefully arranged for him such a Christianity that he was able, without putting himself out, to live as of old, in pagan fashion. Indeed, Christ, the Son of God, came for the very purpose of redeeming him and everybody else. It was because Christ died, that Constantine could live as he pleased. More than that: he could repent and swallow a piece of bread soaked in wine, and that would be his salvation, and everything would be forgiven.

More than that: they even sanctified his robber's power and said that it was from God, and anointed him with oil. For this he, at their wish, arranged an assembly of the priests, and commanded them to say what should be man's relation to God, and commanded that every man should repeat this.

And they repeated it and were satisfied, and so this faith has existed for fifteen hundred years, and other leaders of robber bands introduced it, and they are all anointed, and everything, everything is from God. (In our country a murderess of her husband, a harlot, was from God, and in France Napoleon was from God.)

And for this the priests are not only from God, but almost Gods themselves, because in them sits the Holy Ghost. And He sits also in the Pope, and in our Synod with its commanders, the officials.

And when an anointed person, that is, the leader of a band of robbers, wants to strike down his own people or a foreign nation, they hurry to make some holy water for him, sprinkle with it the cross (the one on which Christ, having carried it, died for having denied these very robbers), and will bless him in his killing, hanging, chopping off of heads.

All would have been well, but they could not agree, and the anointed persons began to call one another robbers, — which they really are, — and the people began to listen, and stopped believing in the anointed persons and the guardians of the Holy Ghost, and learned from them to call them, as is proper and as they call themselves, that is, robbers and cheats.

But the robbers I only mention in passing, because they have corrupted the cheats. What I have been speaking about is the cheats, the so-called Christians. Such they became through their union with the robbers; nor could it be otherwise. They lost the road the moment they sanctified the first king and assured him that with his violence he was able to aid the faith, — the faith about meekness, self-renunciation, and endurance of insults. The whole history of the real church, not the fantastic church, that is, the history of the hierarchy under the power of the kings, is a series of vain endeavours on the part of this unfortunate hierarchy to preserve the truth of the teaching, by preaching it through the lie and departing from it in deeds. The meaning of the hierarchy is based only on the doctrine which it wishes to teach. The teaching speaks of meekness, self-renunciation, love, poverty; but the teaching is preached by means of violence and evil.

For the hierarchy to have something to teach and to have disciples, it must not renounce the teaching; but to clear itself and its illegitimate union with the power, it must by every cunning device conceal the essence of

the teaching, and so transfer the centre of gravity of the teaching from the essence of the teaching to its external side. That is precisely what is done by the hierarchy, the source of that deception of faith which is preached by the church. The source is the union of the hierarchy, under the name of the church, with the power, — with violence. The source of people's wishing to teach the faith to others is in this, that the true faith arraigns them, and they are obliged for the true faith to substitute their own invented faith, which can justify them.

The true faith may be anywhere, except where the faith is obviously false, that is, of the nature of violence, — it cannot be in the state religion. True faith may be in all so-called schisms, heresies, but certainly cannot be where it has united with the state. Strange to say, the appellations, "Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant faith," as established in common speech, mean nothing but "faith united with the temporal power," state religion, and so are false.

The concept of the church, that is, of the agreement of many, of the majority, and at the same time its nearness to the source of the teaching in the first two centuries of Christianity, was only one of the poor external proofs. Paul said, "I know from Christ Himself." Another said, "I know from Luke." And all said, "We think correctly, and the proof that we do is this, — there is a large assembly of us, *ecclesia*, the church." But it is only with the Council at Nicæa, which was established by the emperor, that for a part of those who professed the same teaching there began the direct and palpable deception.

"It seemed good to us and to the Holy Ghost," they began to say then. The concept of the church not only remained a poor argument, but even became a power for some people. It united with the temporal power and began to act as a power. And everything which united with the temporal power and fell under its sway stopped being faith and became a deception.

What does Christianity teach, regarding it as a teaching of any church or of all the churches?

Analyze by mixing or subdividing it, as you please, and the whole Christian teaching immediately divides up into two distinct parts, the doctrine of the dogmas, beginning with the divine Son, the Holy Ghost, the relation between these persons, and ending with the Eucharist with wine or without wine, leavened or unleavened bread, and the moral teaching: of meekness, abstinence from litigation, bodily and spiritual purity, non-condemnation, liberation from the fetters of slavery, and love of peace. No matter how much the teachers of the church tried to mix these two sides of the teaching, they never did mingle, and, like butter separating from water, always keep apart as large and small drops.

The difference between these two sides of the teaching is clear for anybody, and anybody may observe the fruits of either side of the teaching in the lives of the nations, and may from these fruits conclude which side is more important and, if it be allowable to speak of "more true," which is more true. Looking upon the history of Christianity from this side, one is horror-struck. Without exception, from the very beginning to the very end, up to our own time, no matter what dogma we may view, even beginning with the first, the dogma of Christ's divinity, down to the folding of the fingers, the communion with wine and without wine, the fruits of all these mental labours, used for the elucidation of the dogmas, are: malice, hatred, executions, expulsions, the murder of women and children, the stake, tortures. Looking upon the other side of the moral teaching, from the removal to the wilderness for the purpose of communing with God to the custom of distributing white loaves in the prisons, we find the fruits of this to be: all our concepts of goodness, all that joy and comfort, which serves us as a torch in history. —

It was possible for those people to err before whose eyes the fruits of either had not yet become evident, and it was even impossible not to err. It was even possible for those to err who were sincerely drawn into these disputes about the dogmas, without noticing that with these dogmas they were only serving the devil, and not God, without noticing that Christ had expressly said that he came to destroy all dogmas. It was also possible for those to err who, having inherited the traditions about the importance of these dogmas, received such a perverse mental education that they could not see their error; and it is possible for those ignorant people to err, to whom these dogmas mean nothing but words or fantastic representations. But for us, to whom the first meaning of the Gospel, which denies all dogmas, is revealed, for us who have before our eyes the fruits of these dogmas in history, for us it is impossible to err. History is for us a verification of the authenticity of the teaching, it is even a mechanical verification.

Is the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin necessary, or not? What came from it? Malice, curses, scoffing. Has it been of any use? None. Is the doctrine about not punishing the harlot necessary, or not? What came from it? Thousands and thousands of times men have been softened by this reminder.

Again: do all men agree on any of the dogmas? No. Do all agree that to him who asks should be given? Yes.

Now, the first, the dogmas, on which all men do not agree, which are of no use to any one, which ruin men, are what the hierarchy has been giving out as faith; and the second, what all men agree upon, what all men need, and what saves men, this the hierarchy, without daring to deny it, has not dared to advance as the teaching, because this teaching denied the hierarchy itself.

1882.



TO N. N. GE'S (GAY'S)  
PAINTING

1886





## TO N. N. GE'S (GAY'S) PAINTING

### Christ's Last Discourse with His Disciples

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At the top of the painting :

"A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

At the edges, extracts from the Gospel of John, Chap. XIII. 1-35.

Beneath :

Jesus said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies."

At the last supper Jesus showed this in his acts.

After washing the feet of His twelve disciples, He said: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

What was it that Jesus did, and what was the example which He gave to His disciples?

When after the supper Jesus began to wash the feet of His disciples, and Simon Peter wanted to oppose Him, He said to him: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Ye are clean, but not all."

Neither Simon Peter, nor the other disciples understood what Jesus was doing, when, kneeling before them, he washed their feet.

After having washed the feet of His betrayer, Jesus got up, put on His garment, and, sitting down again, said :

“ Know ye what I have done to ye? Ye call me Master, and ye say well, for so I am.”

But they knew not that Judas was the traitor, and did not understand what Jesus did or taught them.

Then, being troubled in spirit, Jesus said :

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you will betray me.”

And again they did not understand what He did, or what He said to them. They only looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake.

Meanwhile the favourite disciple of Jesus was leaning on His bosom. But Simon Peter, raising himself, motioned to the favourite disciple, that he should ask the Teacher of whom He spoke. And the favourite disciple, leaning on Jesus' breast, asked Him.

But Jesus did not give a direct answer. He knew that if He named His enemy, His disciples would be provoked and would wish to rebuke the traitor. But, wishing to save Judas, and not to ruin him, Jesus, instead of answering, stretched out His hand, took a piece of bread, and said softly : “ He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” And when He had given the sop to Judas, He said : “ That thou doest, do quickly.” The disciples, hearing this, thought that Jesus sent Judas to town to buy something that He had need of against the feast. But Judas understood that He was saving him from the wrath of His disciples, and immediately rose.

It is this that is represented in the painting.

The favourite disciple, John, alone knows who the traitor is. He leaped up from his seat and stared at Judas. He does not understand, does not believe, that a living man can hate Him who loves him. He is sorry for the unfortunate man, and is horrified at the same time.

Simon Peter guesses the truth from John's look, and looks around at John, and at Jesus, and at the traitor. And in his ardent heart flames up anger and the desire to defend his beloved Teacher.

Judas has arisen and taken up his garment, and is throwing it over himself and has made the first step. But his eyes cannot turn away from the saddened face of the Teacher. There is still time: he can turn back, fall down before His feet, repenting his sin. But the devil has already taken possession of his heart. "Do not submit," he says to him, "do not submit to your weakness; do not submit to the reproaches of the haughty disciples. They look at you and only wait for the chance to humble you. Go."

Jesus is lying, leaning on His arm; He does not look at Judas, but He sees and knows what is going on in Judas' heart, and waits, and suffers for him. Jesus has with His hands fed His disciples, has with His hands washed the feet of His enemy, has saved him from human punishment, and until the end calls him with love to repentance, and forgives him. And yet Judas does not return to Him. And Jesus grieves on account of all those who do not come to Him.

Judas has gone, and has disappeared in the darkness of the night. The door has barely closed, when the disciples learn who the traitor is. They are agitated and provoked. Peter wants to run after him. But Jesus raises His head, and says: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. . . . A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

It was only then that they understood that, by loving those who were in the world, He proved in fact that He would love them until the end.

1886.



APROPOS OF A. I. ERSHÓV'S  
BOOK, "RECOLLECTIONS  
FROM SEVASTOPOL"

1889



## APROPOS OF A. I. ERSHÓV'S BOOK, "RECOLLECTIONS FROM SEVASTOPOL"

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A. I. ERSHÓV sent me his book, *Recollections from Sevastopol*, asking me to read it and tell him the impression produced on me by this reading.

I read the book, and I feel very much like telling about the impression which the reading produced on me, because this impression is very powerful. The author and I went through all that thirty-four years ago. What we went through was what the author describes, — the horror of the war, — and what he almost does not describe, — the spiritual condition experienced then by the author.

A boy who is just let out from a military school finds his way to Sevastopol. A few months before, this boy was joyous and happy, as girls are happy the next day after their marriage. Only yesterday, it seems, he put on his officer's uniform, which the experienced tailor properly padded with cotton under the facings, spreading the heavy cloth and the shoulder-straps, so as to conceal the youthful and unformed childish breast and give it the aspect of manliness; only yesterday he put on this uniform and went to the hair-dresser's, where he had his hair fixed and treated with pomatum and accentuated his nascent moustache with wax, and, clattering over the

steps with his sword hanging down from a gilt hanger, and with his cap poised jauntily, he walked down the street. He no longer looks about him carefully, for fear of neglecting to salute an officer, and the lower ranks see him from afar, and he nonchalantly touches the vizor of his cap or commands, "Excused!" It was only yesterday that the general, his commander, spoke to him seriously as to an equal, and he saw before him a brilliant military career. It was only yesterday, it seems, that his nurse admired him, and his mother was touched and wept for joy, kissing and fondling him, and he felt both happy and ashamed. It was only yesterday that he met a charming girl; they talked of all kinds of nonsense, and the lips of both of them wrinkled with repressed smiles; and he knew that she, and not only she, but girls a hundred and a thousand times more beautiful than she, might, and certainly must, fall in love with him. All that, it seems, happened yesterday. All that may have been petty, and ridiculous, and vainglorious, but all that was innocent and, therefore, sweet.

And here he is in Sevastopol. Suddenly he sees that something is not quite right, that something he did not expect is taking place. His commander tells him, that same man whom his mother loves so much, from whom not she alone, but everybody else as well, expected so much good, him, with his bodily and spiritual, unique, incomparable beauty, to go where they kill and maim people. The commander does not deny the fact that he is the same youth, whom all love and whom nobody can help but love, and whose life is more important to him than anything else in the world, — he does not deny this, but he calmly says, "Go, and let them kill you." His heart is compressed by double fear, the fear of death and the fear of shame, and, looking as though it did not make any difference to him whether he went to death or stayed where he is, he gets ready, pretending that he is inter-



ested in what he is going for, and also in his things and bed. He goes to the place where they kill; he goes, hoping that it is only talk about people being killed there, but that in reality there is nothing of the kind, but something else. He needs only, however, to stay half an hour on the bastions, in order to see that in reality it is more terrible, more intolerable, than he expected. In his very sight a man was agleam with joy and abloom with alacrity. And here something pings, and this man falls into the excrements of other men, — one terrible suffering, regret, and arraignment of everything taking place here. This is terrible, but he must not look, he must not think. He cannot help thinking: “That was he, but it will soon be I. How so? For what? Why I, that same I who am so good, so sweet, so dear, not only to my nurse, not only to my mother, not only to ‘her,’ but to so many people? How they loved me on my way down, at the station, how they were happy with me, and made me a present of a tobacco-pouch! And here they are not interested in my pouch, not even how and when they will maim this my body, these legs, these arms, and will kill me as they have killed him. Nobody is interested to know whether I shall to-day be one of those; on the contrary, it seems desirable to them that I should be. Yes, I am of no use to any one here. And if I am not, why am I here?” he puts the question to himself, but is unable to find an answer.

It would be well if some one would explain to him what all this is for, or, if not explain, would tell him something encouraging. But no one ever says anything of the kind. Indeed, it seems, it is impossible to say this. It would make him feel ashamed, if some one should say that to him. And so no one says anything. “Why, then, why am I here?” the boy calls out to himself, and he feels like crying. And there is no answer, except a morbid fainting of the heart. But the sergeant

enters, and he dissembles — Time goes on. Others are looking, or he thinks that they are looking at him, and he makes every effort in order not to disgrace himself. Not to disgrace himself, he has to act like the others: stop thinking, smoke, drink, jest, and conceal. And a day, another, a third, a week pass — The boy gets used to concealing his fear and drowning thought. What is most terrible to him is this, that he is the only one who is in such ignorance as to why he is here in this terrible condition: others, it seems to him, know something, and he wants to provoke the others to a frank conversation. He thinks that it would be easier to confess, if he knew that others are in the same terrible condition. But it seems impossible to provoke the others to a sincere conversation: the others apparently are as much afraid to speak of it as he is. It is impossible to speak of it. What they may speak of is scarps and counterscarps, porter, ranks, rations, cards, — that is all right. And thus passes day after day; the youth gets used to not thinking, not asking, and not speaking about what he is doing, and he none the less feels all the time that he is doing what is contrary to his whole being. Thus pass seven months, and the youth is not killed and not maimed, and the war comes to an end.

The terrible moral torture has come to an end. No one has found out how afraid he was, how he wanted to get away, and how he did not understand why he remained there. At last he can breathe freely, come to his senses, and reflect on what has happened.

"Now what has happened? For the period of seven months I was in fear and agony, concealing my suffering from everybody else. There was no exploit, that is, an act of which I may be proud; there was not even such as it would be a pleasure to recall. All the exploits reduce themselves to this, that I was food for cannon, for a long time stayed in a place where they killed a lot of

men, by wounding them in their heads, their breasts, and all the parts of their bodies. But that is not my personal affair. It may have been prominent, but I was partaker in the common cause. The common cause? What does it consist in? They have killed dozens, thousands of men — well, what of it? Sevastopol, that Sevastopol which was defended, has been surrendered, and the fleet has been sunk, and the keys of the temple at Jerusalem have remained where they were before, and Russia has been diminished. What of it? Is it possible there is but one conclusion, that in my stupidity and youth I got into a terrible condition, in which I passed seven months, and that on account of my youth I was unable to get away from it? Is that all?”

The youth is in a very advantageous position for making this inevitable logical conclusion: in the first place the war ended disgracefully and cannot be justified in any way (there is no liberation of Europe or of the Bulgarians, and so forth); in the second place, the youth has not paid such a tribute to war as that of being maimed for life, which would make it hard to recognize as a mistake what was its cause. The youth has received no special honours, the renunciation of which would be connected with the renunciation of war; the youth could tell the truth, which is this, that he accidentally got into a hopeless situation and, not knowing how to get out of it, continued to stay in it until it solved itself. The youth feels like saying this, and he would certainly say it frankly; but suddenly the youth is surprised to hear people all about him speak of the past war, not as something disgraceful, as which it appears to him, but as something good and even unusual; he hears that the defence in which he took part was a great historic event, that it was an unheard-of defence, that those who were in Sevastopol, and he, too, were heroes above all heroes, and that his not having run away, like the staying of the artillery horse, which could

not break the halter and so did not get away, was a great exploit, — that he is a hero. And so the boy listens, at first in surprise, and later with curiosity, and loses the strength to tell the whole truth, — he cannot speak against his companions and give them away; but he still wants to say part of the truth, and he composes a description of what he experienced, and in this description tries to say everything which he experienced. He describes his position in the war: people are being killed about him; he kills people; he feels terror, disgust, and pity. But the very first question which occurs to any one — why he does it, why he does not stop and go away — the author does not answer. He does not say, as they spoke anciently, when they hated their enemies, as the Jews hated the Philistines, that he hated the allies; on the contrary, he here and there shows his sympathy for them as for his brothers. Nor does he speak of his ardent desire to have the keys of the temple at Jerusalem vested in our hands, or even that the fleet should exist or not. You felt, as you read the book, that the questions of men's life and death are not commensurable with the political questions. And the reader feels that to the question why the author did what he did there is but one answer: "Because I was taken up in my childhood, or immediately before the war, or because I accidentally fell into a condition from which I could not get out without great efforts. I fell into this condition, and when I was made to perform the most unnatural deeds in the world, — killing my brothers, who had not offended me in any way, — I preferred doing that to being subject to punishment and disgrace." And though in the book short hints are thrown out as to the love of Tsar and country, one feels that those are only a tribute to the conditions under which the author lives. Though it is assumed that, since it is good to sacrifice one's soundness and life, all the sufferings and death, which are encountered, are reasons for praising those who undergo

them, one feels that the author knows that that is not true, because he does not voluntarily subject his life to danger. One feels that the author knows that there is a law of God — “love thy neighbour, and so thou shalt not kill” — which cannot be abolished by any human sophistry. In this does the worth of the book consist; but it is a pity that this is only felt and not expressed frankly and clearly. The sufferings and death of men are described, but nothing is said as to what produces them. Thirty-five years ago that was all right, but now something else is wanted. It is necessary to describe what produces the sufferings and death at wars, in order that these causes may be found out, understood, and destroyed.

“War! How terrible war is, with its wounds, blood, and deaths,” say people. “We must establish the Red Cross, in order to alleviate the wounds, the sufferings, and death.” But it is not the wounds, the sufferings, death, that are terrible in war. All men, who eternally suffer and who die, ought to become accustomed to sufferings and to death, and not to be terrified by them. Even without war people die from hunger, from inundations, from infectious diseases. What is terrible is not suffering and death, but that people are permitted to produce them.

The one sentence of a man, who for the sake of curiosity asks that a certain man be hanged, and that of another, who answers, “All right, hang him, if you please,” — this one sentence is full of men’s death and suffering. Such a sentence, printed and read, carries death and suffering to millions. It is not suffering and crippling and bodily death, but spiritual crippling and death that should be diminished. We do not need the *Red Cross*, but the simple cross of Christ, in order that the lie and deception be destroyed —

I was just finishing this preface, when a young man from the School of Yunkers came to see me. He told me that he was troubled by religious doubts. He had read

Dostoévski's *The Great Inquisitor*, and he was troubled by doubts as to why Christ taught a doctrine which was so hard to execute. He had read none of my writings. I cautiously told him that he ought to read the Gospel and there look for answers to the questions of life. He listened and agreed with me. Before the end of our conversation I spoke to him about wine, advising him not to drink. He said: "But in military service this is sometimes necessary." I thought, he would say, "For the sake of health, or strength," and was getting ready to vanquish him with proofs from experience and science, but he said: "For example, at Geok-Tepe, when Skóbelev wanted to kill the population, the soldiers refused, and he filled them with liquor, and then —" That is where all the horrors of war are: in this boy with his fresh, youthful face, with his shoulder-straps, through which are carefully drawn the ends of the hood, with clean, blackened boots, and with his naïve eyes, and so forlorn a world-conception!

That is where the horror of war is!

What millions of workers of the Red Cross will cure the wounds which swarm in these words, — the product of a whole education?

*May 10, 1889.*

**“THE NON-ACTING”**

**1893**





## “THE NON-ACTING”<sup>1</sup>

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(a) THE editor of a Parisian periodical, the *Revue des Revues*, assuming, as he writes in his letter, that the opinion of two famous writers concerning the present attitude of the minds might be interesting to me, sent me two clippings from French newspapers. One of these contains Zola's speech, the other Dumas's letter to the editor of the *Gaulois*. I am very thankful to Mr. Smith for his message.

Both these documents, on account of the reputation of their authors, and their timeliness, and chiefly on account of their oppositeness, are of a profound interest, and I want to express the few thoughts which they evoked in me.

It is difficult in the current literature to find, in a more succinct, powerful, and striking form, the expression of those two very fundamental forces, from which the resultant for the motion of humanity is composed; one,—the dead force of inertia, which strives to retain humanity on the road which it has already traversed, the

<sup>1</sup>This article was in 1896 rewritten by Tolstóy in French, and was published by his French translator, Halpérine-Kaminsky, and also in the *Cosmopolis*. The important changes are given here in the notes marked *F*.

The order of the passages in the French version is as follows: a, k, l, m, c, e, d, g, h, q, o, s, p, r, v; aa, cc, ee, dd, gg, ii, jj, ll, kk, mm, qq, ss, uu, rr, oo, ww, xx, zz. The other passages are omitted in the French.

other, the living force of reason, which draws it toward the light.

Zola does not approve of this, that the new teachers of youth propose to them to believe in something indefinite and vague, and he is quite right, but, unfortunately, he, on his side, proposes to them another belief, a belief in something far more vague and indefinite, in science and labour.

(b) Zola considers the question as to what the science is in which we must never stop believing to be quite solved and subject to no doubt.

(c) To work in the name of science! But the trouble is, that the word "science" has a very broad and little defined meaning, so that what some people regard as science, that is, a very important business, is considered by others, by far the greater number of men, by all the working people, as unnecessary foolishness. It cannot be said that this is due to the ignorance of the working people, who are unable to understand all the profundity of science, — the learned themselves constantly deny one another. One set of scholars consider philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, political economy, the science of sciences, while other scholars, the natural scientists, consider all that a most trifling, unscientific business; and, on the other hand, what the positivists consider to be the most important sciences are regarded by the spiritualists, the philosophers, and the theologians as useless, if not harmful, occupations. More than that: in one and the same branch every system has among its very priests its ardent defenders and adversaries, who are equally competent and who express diametrically opposite opinions.<sup>1</sup>

We all know that what was considered to be exclu-

<sup>1</sup> After this the French version has: "Finally, do we not see every year new scientific discoveries which, after having been admired by all the boobies of the world and having brought fortunes to their inventors, are subsequently recognized as ridiculous errors by those very men who have extolled them?"

sively science and a very important matter by the Romans, what they prided themselves on, without which they considered a man to be a barbarian, was rhetoric, that is, an exercise which we now make fun of and consider not only no art, but simply foolishness. We know also that what was considered to be art and the most important business in the Middle Ages, scholasticism, we make fun of now. And I think it does not take any special daring of thought in order from the vast amount of knowledge, which in our world is regarded as an important business and is called science, to foresee at which of these our descendants, reading the description of the seriousness with which we busied ourselves with our rhetorics and scholastics, that in our time were regarded as science, will also shrug their shoulders.

(*d*) In our time people, having freed themselves from one kind of superstitions without being cognizant of it, have fallen into other superstitions, not less groundless and harmful than those from which they have just freed themselves. Having freed themselves from the superstitions of the obsolete religions, people have fallen into the scientific superstitions. At first it seems that there can be nothing in common between the beliefs of the Egyptians as to there being a bird Phœnix and the beliefs of our time as to the world having resulted from the revolution of matter and the struggle for existence, as to criminality arising from heredity, as to the existence of micro-organisms in the shape of commas, which cause all the diseases, and so forth. There would seem to be nothing in common between these beliefs, but that only seems so.

We need only in imagination transfer ourselves to the mental condition of the ancient Egyptian, when his beliefs were offered to him by his priests, to convince ourselves that the bases on which he accepted his beliefs and that on which at present all kinds of scientific propositions are

accepted by the men of our time are not only similar, but also absolutely identical.

As the Egyptian really did not believe in the Phœnix, but in this, that there are men who incontestably know the highest truth accessible to men, and that, therefore, it is good to believe in them, so also the men of our time believe, not in the Darwinian theory of heredity and in the commas, but in what is given out to them as the truth by the priests of science, the foundations of whose activity remain as mysterious to the believers as were for the Egyptians the activities of their priests.

I venture to say also that I have more than once observed that, as the ancient priests lied and gave out as the truth whatever occurred to them, without its being verified by any one but their own priests, so also do the so-called men of science, frequently.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Instead of the whole of passage (*d*), which is obviously the result of the censor's action, the French version gives the following: "The opinion is generally admitted that religion and science are opposed to one another. So they are, but only in relation to time, that is, what by the contemporaries is regarded as science frequently becomes religion for the descendants. What is ordinarily designated by the name of religion is most generally the science of the past, while what is called science is to a great extent the religion of the present.

"We say that the affirmation of the Jews that the world was created in six days, that the children will be punished for the sins of their fathers, that certain maladies may be cured by looking at a serpent, are all data of religion; while we regard as data of science the affirmations of our contemporaries that the world created itself by turning about a centre which is everywhere, that all the species are the result of the struggle for existence, that criminals are the products of heredity, that there are certain organisms in the form of commas, which produce certain diseases. It is easy to see, if in imagination we transfer ourselves to the mental state of an ancient Jew, that for him the creation of the world in six days, the serpent curing diseases, etc., were data of science in its highest degree of development, just as for a man of our time are Darwin's law, Koch's commas, heredity, etc.

"And just as a Jew did not exactly believe in the creation of the world in six days, in the serpent curing certain diseases, etc., but in the infallibility of his priests and, therefore, in all their assertions, so also the great majority of the civilized people of our time do not

(e) Zola's whole discourse is directed against the teachers of youth, who invite them to return to the obsolete beliefs, and Zola considers himself to be their adversary. In reality, those against whom he arms himself and those whom he champions, that is, the representatives of science, are men of the same camp.

(f) If they properly analyzed each other's tendencies, they would find no cause for quarrels, “*querelles d'amoureux*,” as Dumas says. Both seek their bases of life, its prime movers, not in themselves, not in their reason, but in the external human forms of life: some, in what they call religion; others, in what they call science. Some, those who look for salvation in religion, take it from the tradition of the ancient knowledge of other men, and want to believe in this alien and ancient knowledge; others, those who look for salvation in what they call science, do not take it from their knowledge, but from the knowledge of other men, and believe in this other knowledge. The first see the salvation of humanity in a corrected, mended, or purified Catholicism; the others see it in the aggregate of that most accidental, varied, and unnecessary knowledge which they call science and consider to be something self-acting and beneficent and, therefore, inevitably certain to correct all the defects of life and give to humanity the highest accessible good. The first seem to be intent on not seeing that what they wish to reëstablish is only an empty chrysalis, from which the butterfly has long ago flown away, to lay eggs in another place, and that this reconstruction will not only fail to remove the ca-

believe in the formation of the worlds through rotation, or in heredity, or in the comas, but in the infallibility of their lay priests who are called savants and who affirm, with the same aplomb as the Jewish priests, everything which they pretend to know.

“I will even say that if the ancient priests, who were controlled only by their colleagues, permitted themselves now and then to depart from veracity for no other reason than in order to mystify their public, the priests of modern science do the same with just as much boldness.”

lamities of our time, but will even increase them, by turning people's eyes away from the real work. The second do not want to see that what they call science, being a fortuitous collection of some kind of knowledge, which at the present time has interested a few idle men, can either be an innocent pastime for rich people, or, at best, an instrument of evil or good, according to this, in whose hands it shall be, but is unable in itself to mend anything. In reality, in the depth of their hearts, neither of them believes in the reality of the means which they propose, and both alike only try to turn their own eyes and those of other men away from the abyss, before which humanity is standing already and into which, continuing to walk on the same road, it must inevitably fall. The first see this distractive means in mysticism; the others, whose representative Zola is, in the stultifying action of work for the sake of science.

The difference between the two is this, that the first believe in the ancient wisdom, the lie of which has been pointed out, and the second believe in the new wisdom, the lie of which has not yet been made manifest, and which, therefore, inspires a few naïve people with a certain tremor of awe. (*g*) However, the superstition in the latter case is hardly less than in the first. The only difference is this, that one is the superstition of the past, the other the superstition of the present.<sup>1</sup>

(*h*) And so, to follow the advice of Zola, by devoting one's life to the service of what in our time and world is considered science, is not that dangerous? (*i*) What if

<sup>1</sup> After this, the French rendering reads: "And the proportion of error and truth is, I suppose, very nearly the same in both. Consequently, to work in the name of any belief whatsoever, be it religion or science, is not only a doubtful means for ameliorating the existence of man, but also a dangerous means which may produce more evil than good.

"To consecrate one's life to the fulfilment of duties imposed by religion, — prayers, communion, alms ;"

I shall devote all my life to the investigation of phenomena, like those of heredity according to Lombroso's teaching, and of Koch's liquid, and of the formation of humus by means of actions of the worms, and of Crookes's fourth condition of matter, and so forth, (j) and suddenly I learn before death that what I devoted my whole life to were foolish and even harmful trifles, while life was only one?

(k) There is a little known Chinese philosopher, Lao-tse (the best translation of his book, *Of the Road of Virtue*, is that by Stanislas Julien). The essence of Lao-tse's teaching is this, that the highest good of individual men, and especially of the aggregate of men, of nations, can be acquired through the knowledge of “Tao,” — a word which is translated by “path, virtue, truth;” but the knowledge of “Tao” can be acquired only through non-acting, “*le non-agir*,” as Julien translates it. All the misfortunes of men, according to Lao-tse's teaching, are due, not so much to their not having done what is necessary as to their doing what they ought not to do. And so men would be freed from all personal and especially from all social misfortunes, — it is the latter that the Chinese sage has more especially in mind, — if they practised non-acting (*s'ils pratiquaient le non-agir*).

(l) I believe that he is quite right. Let each man work zealously. But at what? The gambler on Exchange, the banker, returns home from the Exchange, where he has worked zealously; the manufacturer returns from his establishment, where thousands of men ruin their lives in manufacturing mirrors, tobacco, whiskey. All these men work, but can we encourage them in their work? But perhaps we ought to speak only of men working for science.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Instead of (l) the French version runs: “Lao-tse's idea seems queer, but it is impossible not to be of his opinion, if we consider the

(*m*) I constantly receive from all kinds of authors all kinds of pamphlets, and frequently books, with artistic and scientific studies.

One has definitely settled the question of Christian gnoseology, another has printed a book on the cosmic ether, a third has settled the social question, a fourth — the political question, a fifth — the Eastern question, a sixth edits a periodical devoted to the investigations of the mysterious forces of the spirit and of Nature, a seventh has solved the problem of the knight.

All these men work for science assiduously and zealously, but I think that the time and labour, not only of all these writers, but even of many others, have not only been wasted, but have also been harmful. They have been harmful, in the first place, because in the preparation of these writings thousands of men have manufactured the paper and the types, have set type and printed, and, above all, have fed and clothed all these workers of science, (*n*) and also, because all these authors, instead of feeling their guilt toward society, as they would if they played cards or blind man's buff, continue with a calm conscience to do their useless work.

(*o*) Who does not know those cruel men, hopeless as regards the truth, who are so busy that they never have any time, especially no time to find out whether anybody

results of the occupations of the great majority of the men of our century.

"Let all men work assiduously, and their work will make their lives good and happy, and will deliver them from the torment of infinity, we are told by Zola. Work! But at what? The manufacturers and sellers of opium, of tobacco, of whiskey, the gamblers on the 'Change, the inventors and manufacturers of engines of destruction, all the military, all the jailers, all the hangmen, work, but it is evident that humanity would only be the gainer, if all these workers stopped working.

"But maybe Zola's recommendation has reference only to men whose work is inspired by science? In fact, the greater part of Zola's discourse is devoted to the rehabilitation of science, which he supposes to be attacked."



wants the work over which they are working with such zeal, or whether it is not harmful? You say to them, “Your work is useless or harmful for such and such a reason,—wait, we shall discuss the matter;” but they do not listen to you, and answer with irony, “You have time to discuss the matter, since you have nothing to do, (*p*) but I am working on an investigation of how many times such and such a word is used by such and such an ancient author, or on the definition of the forms of the atoms, or on telepathy,” and so forth.

(*q*) Besides, I have always marvelled at that strange opinion, which has taken root more especially in Western Europe, that work is something like a virtue, and long before reading this idea, as clearly expressed in Zola’s discourse, I frequently marvelled at the strange significance ascribed to work.

It is only the ant in the fable, a being deprived of reason and of strivings after the good, that could have thought that work was a virtue, and that could pride itself on it.

Zola says that work makes man good; but I have observed the opposite: conscious work, the antlike pride in one’s work, makes cruel, not only the ant, but also man.

(*r*) The greatest malefactors of humanity<sup>1</sup> have always been very busy, never for a moment remaining without an occupation or amusement.

But even if industry is not an obvious vice, it can in no way be considered a virtue. Work can no more be a virtue than eating. Work is a necessity, the deprivation of which produces suffering, but it is by no means a virtue. The exaltation of work is as monstrous as would be the exaltation of eating to the rank of a virtue. The significance ascribed to work in our society could have arisen only as a reaction against idleness, raised to the attribute

<sup>1</sup> Such as Nero and Peter I. — *F*.

of nobility and even now considered as a distinction among the rich and uneducated classes. Work, the exercise of one's organs, is always a necessity for man, as is proved both by the calves who gambol about the pole to which they are tied, and by the men of the wealthy classes,<sup>1</sup> the martyrs of gymnastics and of all kinds of games, — cards, chess, lawn-tennis, and so forth, — who are not able to find any more sensible exercise for their organs.

Work is not only no virtue, but in our falsely organized society it is for the most part a means of moral anæsthetics, something like smoking or drinking, for the purpose of concealing from oneself the irregularities and viciousness of our life.

(s) "I have no time to talk with you about philosophy, morality, religion; I have to edit a daily with half a million subscribers;<sup>2</sup> I have to build the Eiffel Tower, to organize the Chicago Exposition, to cut the Panama Canal,<sup>3</sup> (t) to write the twenty-eighth volume of my works, to paint a picture, to write an opera."

(u) If the men of our time did not have the excuse of their all-absorbing work, they would be unable to live as they now live. Only thanks to the fact that with their trifling and for the most part harmful work they conceal from themselves those contradictions in which they live, — thanks only to that, are they able to live as they do.

It is as such a means that Zola represents work to his hearers. He says directly: "This is only an empirical means for passing an honourable and almost peaceful life. But is that little, is it little to acquire good physical and moral health and to avoid the danger of a dream, by

<sup>1</sup> Who can find no more useful employment for their mental faculties than the reading of periodicals and novels. — *F*.

<sup>2</sup> I have to organize an army. — *F*.

<sup>3</sup> To investigate heredity. — *F*.



*Émile Zola.*



solving by work the question of the greatest happiness accessible to man ? ”

(v) Such is the advice given by Zola to the youth of our time !

(aa) Something quite different is said by Dumas. The chief difference between Dumas’s letter and Zola’s discourse, to say nothing of the external difference, which is this, that Zola’s discourse is directed to the youth and seems to curry favour with them (bb) (which has become a universal and disagreeable phenomenon of our time, as also the currying of favour with women by the authors), (cc) while Dumas’s letter is not directed to the youth and does not make them compliments, but on the contrary points out to them their constant error of self-confidence, and so, instead of impressing upon the youth that they are very important personages and that the whole strength is in them, which they must by no means think, if they want to do something sensible, instructs not only them, but also adults and old people in very many things, — the chief difference is this, that Zola’s discourse puts people to sleep, retaining them on the path on which they are travelling, assuring them that what they know is precisely what they ought to know ; while Dumas’s letter wakes people, pointing out to them that their life is not at all what it ought to be, and that they do not know the chief thing which they ought to know.

(dd) Dumas, too, believes as little in the superstition of the past as in the superstition of the present. But for the very reason that he does not believe in the superstition of the past, nor in the superstition of the present, he thinks for himself, and so sees clearly, not only the present, but also the future, as those saw it who in antiquity were called “ seeing ” prophets. Strange though it must seem to those who, reading the works of authors, see only the external side of their authorship, and not the author’s

soul, the same Dumas who wrote *Dame aux Camélias*, *Affaire Clémenceau*, and so forth, now sees the future and prophesies about it. No matter how strange this may seem to us, who are accustomed to imagine a prophet in skins of animals and in the wilderness, prophecy remains prophecy, even though it is not uttered on the banks of the Jordan, but is printed on the banks of the Seine in the printing-office of the *Gaulois*, and Dumas's words are indeed a prophecy and bear in themselves the chief symptoms of a prophecy: in the first place, these words are the very opposite of the universal disposition of the men among whom they are uttered; in the second, the men who hear these words, in spite of themselves and not themselves knowing why, agree with them; and, in the third, which is most important, the prophecy contributes to the realization of what it predicts.

(ee) The more people will believe in this, that they may be led by something external, which acts of itself, in spite of their will, to a change and amelioration of their lives, the more difficult will this change and amelioration be. In this does the chief defect of Zola's discourse lie. But, on the contrary, the more they will believe in what Dumas predicts, namely, that inevitably and soon there will come the time when all men shall love one another and, abandoning themselves to this love, shall change all their present life, the quicker this time will arrive. In this does the chief merit of Dumas's letter consist. (ff) Zola advises men not to change their lives, but only to intensify their activity in the direction once started upon, and thus keeps them from changing their lives, while Dumas, by predicting an internal change of human sentiments, inspires them to change them.

(gg) Dumas predicts that men, having tried everything, will finally, in a very short time, go seriously about the application to life of the law of the “love of one another,” and will, as he says, be seized “by a madness, an in-

sanity” of love. (hh) He says that amidst the phenomena which appear so threatening he sees already the signs of that new nascent disposition of love among men; that the armed nations no longer hate one another, that in the struggle of the wealthy classes with the poor there is no longer manifested the triumph of the victors, but the sincere compassion of the victors for the conquered and dissatisfaction and shame on account of the victory; he sees, above all, he says, centres of love attraction form, growing like a snowball, and inevitably sure to attract everything living, which so far has not yet united with them, and he sees that by thus changing the disposition love will destroy all the evil from which people suffer.

(ii) I think that, even if we may disagree as to the nearness of the change which Dumas predicts, or even the possibility itself of such a love infatuation of men for one another, no one will dispute the fact that, if this happened, humanity would be freed from the great majority of misfortunes which beset and menace it now.<sup>1</sup> (jj) It cannot be denied that, if men did what thousands of years ago was prescribed not only by Christ, but also by all the sages of the world, that is, if, though unable to love one another as themselves, men did not do to one another what they do not want that others should do to them, if men abandoned themselves to altruism instead of egoism, if the structure of life from being individualistic were changed to a collectivistic one, as the men of science express the same idea in their bad jargon, the lives of men,

<sup>1</sup> The French version of (jj) differs in wording but not in essence from the Russian. It is preceded by the following passage: “The only objection, or rather the only question which can be put to Dumas, is this: If the love of our neighbour is possible, inherent in human nature, why have so many thousand years passed (for the commandment of loving God and our neighbour is not Christ’s, but even that of Moses) without its being practised by men, who know this means of happiness? What cause impedes the manifestation of this natural sentiment, which is so beneficent to humanity?”

instead of being miserable, would become happy. More than that: everybody recognizes the fact that life, continued on those pagan foundations of the struggle on which it is proceeding now, will inevitably bring humanity to the greatest misfortunes, and that this time is near at hand. Everybody sees that the more fully and the more energetically they shall take the land and the products of labour away from one another, the more envenomed they will become and the more inevitably will the people from whom everything has been taken away seize from the robbers what for so long a time they have been deprived of, and cruelly repay them for all their privations.<sup>1</sup> (*kk*) Besides, all the men of our world recognize the obligatoriness for themselves of the religious Christian law of love, or the worldly law, based on the same Christian law, of respect for another's life and for man's personality and rights.

(*ll*) Men know all this, and, in spite of it, arrange their lives contrary to their advantage and security, and to the law which they profess.

(*mm*) Apparently there is some hidden, but important cause, which keeps people from fulfilling what is advantageous for them, what would free them from an obvious danger, and what they recognize as religious and moral law, which is binding on them. It is certainly not for the purpose of deceiving one another that the love of one another has been extolled among them for so many centuries and is now preached from thousands of different religious and lay pulpits. It has long been time to decide

<sup>1</sup> Nor does any one doubt that the respective armaments of the nations will end in terrible massacres, in the ruin and the degeneration of all the nations chained in this circle of armaments. Nobody doubts that the present order of things, if it is prolonged for a few decades longer, will lead to a certain and general catastrophe. We need only open our eyes, to see the abyss toward which we are walking. But we can say that Jesus' prophecy has been fulfilled in the men of our time: They have ears, in order not to hear, and eyes, in order not to see, and reason, in order not to understand. — *F.*



that the love of one's neighbour is an advantageous, useful, and good thing, and on its basis to build up life, or, recognizing that love is an unrealizable dream, to stop talking of it. But people still fail to do either; they continue to live contrary to love and to extol it. They evidently believe that love is possible, desirable, and proper for them, but are unable to realize it. What is the cause of it? <sup>1</sup>

All the great changes in the life of one man or in the life of the whole of humanity begin and are achieved in thought only. No matter what external changes may take place in the lives of men, no matter how men may preach the necessity of changing their sentiments and acts, the lives of men will not change, unless a change takes place in their thoughts. But let a change take place in thought, and sooner or later, according to the importance of the change, it will take place in the feelings and actions and lives of men, and just as inevitably as the ship changes its direction after the turn of the rudder.

Beginning with the first words of His preaching, Christ did not say to men: “Do this way or that way, have such or such feelings,” but He said to men: “*Μετανοείτε*, bethink yourselves, change the comprehension of life.” He did not say to men, “Love one another” (this He said later to His disciples, men who understood His teachings), but He said to all men what had been said before by His predecessor, John the Baptist, “Repent, that is, bethink yourselves, change your comprehension of life, *μετανοείτε*,

<sup>1</sup> After this follows in the French version: “What is the cause of the contradiction which has lasted for centuries? It is not that the men of our time have not the desire or the possibility of doing what is dictated to them by their good sense and the danger of their condition, and especially by the law of Him whom they call God and by their conscience, but because they do precisely what Zola advises them to do: they are busy, they all work at something begun long ago, and are unable to stop for the purpose of concentrating themselves and reflecting on what they should be.”

bethink yourselves, else you will all perish." "The meaning of your life cannot consist in this: that each of you should seek the separate good of his personality, or the good of a certain aggregate of men," He said, "because this good, acquired at the expense of other personalities, families, nations, who are seeking the same with the same means, is obviously not only unattainable, but must inevitably bring you to perdition. Understand that the meaning of your life can be only in the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent you into it and demands of you, not the pursuit of your personal aims, but of His end, which consists in the establishment of union and love among all beings, in the establishment of the kingdom of God,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "*Metavœûre*, change in such a way that you may understand life, or you will all perish," He said eighteen hundred years ago; and at present all the contradictions and all the evils of our time are due to this, that men have not listened to Him and have not accepted the conception of life which He proposed to them. *Metavœûre*, He said, "or you will all perish." The alternative is the same. The only difference is that it is more pressing in our time. If it was possible two thousand years ago, at the time of the Roman Empire, or even at the time of Charles V., or even before the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, not to see the vanity, I shall even say the absurdity of the attempts at attaining personal happiness, the happiness of the family, the nation, or the state, by means of struggling against those who try to attain the same personal happiness, or that of the family or the state, this illusion has become absolutely impossible in our time for any man who will stop, if only for a moment, in his work and will reflect on what he is, what the world around him is, and what he ought to be. Indeed, if I were called upon to give just one piece of advice, such as I should regard as most useful to men, I would say only this to them: "For God's sake, stop for a moment, cease working, look about you, think of what you are, what you ought to be, — think of the ideal."

Zola says that the nations ought not to look up to or to believe in a superior force, nor to rave about an ideal. Probably Zola understands by the word "ideal" either the supernatural, that is, the theological balderdash about the Trinity, the church, the Pope, etc., or the inexplicable, as he says, the forces of the vast universe in which we welter. And in this case people will do well to follow Zola's advice. But the ideal is neither the supernatural nor the inexplicable. The ideal is, on the contrary, the most natural thing possible, and, I shall not say the most explicable, but the most certain thing for man.

(*nn*) when the swords shall be forged into ploughshares and the spears into pruning-hooks, and the lion shall lie with the lamb, as the prophets expressed it. Change your comprehension of life, or else you will perish,” said He. But men have paid no attention to Christ and have not changed their comprehension of life, and have retained it until the present. And it is this false conception of life, which men have retained, in spite of the complexity of the forms of life and the development of the consciousness of the men of our time, that is the cause why men, comprehending the whole beneficence of love, the whole perilousness of life, which is opposed to it, recognizing it as the law of their God or the law of life, are none the less unable to follow it.

Indeed, what chance has a man of our life, who assumes the aim of his life to lie in his personal or domestic or national good, which is attained only by a tense struggle with other men striving for the same, to love those who are always in his way, and whom he must inevitably ruin in order that he may attain his own ends?

The ideal, in geometry, is the absolutely straight line and the circle all radii of which are equal; in science, it is pure truth; in morality — perfect virtue. Though all these things, the straight line, and pure truth and perfect virtue, have never existed, they are none the less natural, better known, and more explicable to us than all our other knowledge; but they are the things which we know truly and with absolute certainty.

It is generally said that reality is what exists, or rather, that only that which exists is real. The very opposite is true: true reality, the one we know truly, is what has never existed. The ideal is the only thing which we know with certainty: and that has never existed. It is only thanks to the ideal that we know anything whatever, and so it is only the ideal that can guide us as individuals and as humanity in our existence. The Christian ideal has been before us for eighteen centuries; it burns in our time with such intensity that we have to make great efforts in order not to see that all our evils are due to our not taking it as our guide. And the more difficult it is getting not to see this, the more do certain men increase their efforts to persuade us to do as they do, to shut our eyes, in order that we may not see it. To be sure of getting to our destination, we must throw the compass overboard, they say, and never stop. — *F*.

(oo) For a change of feelings and acts to take place, there must first of all take place a change of thoughts. For a change of thoughts to take place, a man must necessarily stop and turn his attention to what he must understand. For people, who with cries and the rumble of wheels are borne to the precipice, to hear what is being shouted by those who want to save them, they must first of all stop. (pp) Else, how will a man change his thoughts, his conception of life, if he shall without cessation, with infatuation, and even urged on by men, who assure him that this is necessary, work on the basis of the same false conception of life which he ought to change?

Men's sufferings arising from the false conception of life have become so acute, the good given by the true comprehension of life has become so clear and obvious to all, that, for men to change their life in conformity with their consciousness, they must in our time undertake nothing, do nothing, but must only stop, cease doing what they have been doing, concentrate themselves, and think.

(qq) The men of our Christian world are in the condition in which men would be, if they were tugging at a light load and kept pulling in the opposite directions, only because in their hurry they do not have the time to come to an agreement.

(rr) If in former times, when the wretchedness of the pagan life and the good promised in love had not yet been made so clear, people were able unconsciously to maintain slavery, executions, and wars, and with sensible arguments to defend their position, this has become absolutely impossible at present; the men of our time can live a pagan life, but they cannot justify it. (ss) The men of our Christian world need only stop for a moment in their activity, consider their position, apply the demands of their reason and heart to the conditions of life which surround them, in order that they may see that

their whole life, all their acts, are a constant crying contradiction to their conscience, reason, and heart.

Ask each man of our time, separately, what he is guided by and what he considers it is necessary to be guided by in his life, and nearly every one will tell you that he is guided by justice, if not by love, (*tt*) that he personally, recognizing either the obligatoriness of the Christian teaching, or the moral worldly principles, which are based on the same Christianity, submits to these conditions of life only because they are necessary for other people; ask another, a third, and they will say the same. (*uu*) And they are all sincere. According to the quality of their consciousness, the majority of the men of our time ought long ago to have lived as Christians among themselves. See how they live in reality: they live like beasts.<sup>1</sup>

(*vv*) And thus the majority of the men of the Christian world live a pagan life, not so much because they wish to live thus, as because the structure of life, which at one time was necessary to men with an entirely different consciousness, has remained the same and is supported by the turmoil of life, which gives them no time to bethink themselves and to change it according to their consciousness.

(*ww*) Men need but stop for a time doing what they are advised to do by Zola and by his supposed adversaries, by all those who, under the pretext of a slow and gradual progress, wish to retain the existing order, — stop stultifying themselves with false beliefs and, above all, with incessant, self-satisfying work in matters which are not justified by their consciences, and they will see at once that the meaning of their life cannot be the obvi-

<sup>1</sup> Thus, for the great majority of the men of our Christian world, the organization of their life is not the result of their manner of seeing and feeling, but is due to the fact that certain forms, once necessary, continue to exist up to the present, through nothing but the inertia of social life. — *F*.

ously deceptive striving after the individual, domestic, national, or political good, which is based on the struggle with others; they would see that the only possible, sensible meaning of life is the one which more than eighteen hundred years ago was revealed by Christianity to mankind.<sup>1</sup>

(xx) The feast has long been ready and all have long ago been called to it; but one has bought land, another is getting married, a third is examining his oxen, a fourth is building a railroad or a factory, or is busy with missionary work in Japan or India, or preaches, or introduces "Home rule" bills or a military law, or overthrows it, or passes an examination, or writes a learned work, a poem, a novel. They have all no time, no time to come to their senses, to bethink themselves, to look at themselves and at the world, and to ask themselves: "What am I doing? What for? It cannot be that the force which brought me into the world, with my qualities of mind and love, should have produced me with these for no other purpose than to deceive me, for no other purpose than that I, imagining that for the attainment of the greatest good for my perishing personality, I may dispose of my own life, and of that of others as I please, should convince myself at last that the more I try to do so,<sup>2</sup> (yy) the worse it is for

<sup>1</sup>The last paragraph runs as follows in the French version: "Let the people of our Christian world stop in their labours and reflect for a moment on their condition, and they will involuntarily be led to accept the conception of life which is given by Christianity, a conception which is so natural, so simply and so completely in correspondence with the needs of the spirit and the heart of humanity, that it would be produced almost of its own accord in the understanding of him who would be liberated, if only for a moment, from the fetters which hold him through the complication of his work and of the work of others."

<sup>2</sup>The more I shall find myself in contradiction with my reason and my desire to love and be loved, and the more disenchantment and suffering I shall experience. And is it not more probable that, since I did not come into the world spontaneously, but by the will of Him who sent me, my reason and my desire to love and be loved have been given me only to guide me in the accomplishment of this will? — F.

me, my family, my country, and the more I depart from the demands of love and reason which are implanted in me and which do not for a moment cease putting forth their demands, and from the true good. It cannot be that these highest qualities of my soul should be given me only to act as fetters on the legs of a captive, by interfering with me in the attainment of my aims. And is it not more likely that the force which has sent me into the world has produced me with my reason and my love, not for any accidental momentary ends, which are always contrary to the ends of other beings (which it could not do, since I and my aims did not yet exist when it produced me), but for the attainment of its own ends, to coöperate with which these fundamental qualities of my soul are given me? And so would it not be better for me, instead of persisting in following my own will and the will of other men, who are opposed to these higher qualities and who bring me to these misfortunes, once and for all to recognize as the aim of my life the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent me and in everything and always, in spite of all other considerations, to follow only those indications of reason and love which He has implanted in me for the fulfilment of His will?

Such is the Christian conception of life, which begs for recognition in the soul of every man of our time. To realize the kingdom of God, it is necessary for all men to begin to love one another without distinction of personalities, families, nationalities. For people to be able to love one another in this way, it is necessary for their life-conception to be changed. For their life-conception to be changed, it is necessary for them to come to their senses, and for them to come to their senses, they must first stop for a little while in that feverish activity to which they are devoted in the name of affairs demanded by their pagan conception of life; they must, at least for

a time, free themselves from what the Hindoos call "sansara," that turmoil of life which more than anything else keeps people from understanding the meaning of their existence.

The wretchedness of the pagan life and the clearness and diffusion of the Christian consciousness have reached such a point in our time that people need but stop in their turmoil, in order at once to see the senselessness of their activity, and the Christian conception would as inevitably form itself in their consciousness as water freezes in the cold, as soon as it is not stirred.

(zz) People need only make this life-conception their own, and their love of one another, of all men, of everything living, which now is to be found in them in a latent form, will as inevitably be manifested in their activity and become the prime mover of all their acts, as now, with the pagan conception of life, there is manifested love toward oneself, toward the family exclusively, toward one's nation exclusively.

This Christian love need only be manifested in men, and the old forms of life will fall of themselves, without the least effort, and there will be new forms of the blissful life, the absence of which presents itself to men as the chief obstacle in the realization of what their reason and heart have long been demanding.

If people employed but one-hundredth part of the energy, which now they apply to the performance of all kinds of material, unjustifiable acts, which, therefore, bedim their consciousness, in the elucidation of this same consciousness, and for the fulfilment of what it demands of them, then much more quickly and much more simply than we can imagine it, there would be<sup>1</sup> established the

<sup>1</sup> Would be accomplished amidst us the change which Dumas predicts and which the prophets have predicted, and men would attain the good promised by Jesus in His good news. — *F*.



kingdom of God, which He demands of them, and men would find the good which was promised to them.

“Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

*August 9, 1893.*



THREE PARABLES

1895



# THREE PARABLES

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## PARABLE THE FIRST

WEEDS grew up in a good meadow. To get rid of them, the owners of the meadow mowed them down, but the weeds only grew more numerous. And a good and wise husbandman visited the owners of the meadow, and among other instructions which he gave them, he said that the weeds ought not to be mowed down, for that made them only grow more numerous, but that they ought to be torn out by the root.

But, because the owners of the meadow did not notice, among the other injunctions of the good husbandman, the injunction that they should not mow down the weeds, but should tear them out, or because they did not understand him, or because, for reasons of their own, they did not wish to do so, the injunction about not mowing the weeds, but tearing them out, was not fulfilled, as though it had never existed, and the people continued to mow the weeds and to spread them. And although in the following years there were some men who reminded the owners of the meadow of the injunction of the good and wise husbandman, no attention was paid to them, and the owners continued to act as before, so that it not only became a habit with them, but even a sacred tradition, to mow down the weeds as soon as they appeared, and the meadow became more and more covered with weeds. It finally went so far that nothing was left in the meadow

but weeds, and people complained and tried to find all kinds of ways to mend matters, but they did not make use of the one means which had long ago been prescribed to them by the good and wise husbandman. And it happened that a man, who at last saw the evil plight in which the meadow was, and who in the forgotten injunctions of the husbandman had found the rule that the weeds were not to be mowed down, but to be plucked out by the root, reminded the owners of the meadow that they acted unwisely, and that their un wisdom had long ago been pointed out by the good and wise husbandman.

Well? Instead of verifying the correctness of what the man reminded them of, and, in case it was found to be correct, desisting from the mowing of the weeds, and, in case it was found to be incorrect, proving to him the injustice of his reminder, or recognizing the injunctions of the good and wise husbandman as ill-grounded and non-obligatory for themselves, the owners of the meadow did none of these things, but took umbrage at the man's reminder and began to scold him. Some called him a senseless and proud man, who imagined that he was the only one of them all who understood the husbandman's injunction; others called him a malicious misinterpreter and calumniator; others again, forgetting that he had not spoken in his own name, but had reminded them only of the injunctions of the universally respected wise husbandman, called him a dangerous man, who wished to spread the weeds and deprive people of their meadow.

"He says that we ought not to mow the weeds; but if we do not destroy the weeds," they said, intentionally misrepresenting the man as saying that they ought not to destroy the weeds, whereas he only said that the weeds should not be mowed down, but plucked out, "the weeds will grow rank and will entirely ruin our meadow. And why is the meadow given to us, if we are to raise weeds in it?"

And the opinion that this man was a madman, or a false interpreter, or had in view the detriment of people became so thoroughly confirmed that everybody scolded him and made fun of him. And no matter how much this man explained that, far from wishing to spread the weeds, he considered the destruction of the weeds to be one of the chief occupations of a farmer, as this was understood by the good and wise husbandman, of whose words he reminded them,—no matter how much he spoke of this,—they paid no attention to him, because it was definitely decided that he was either mad and proud, who perversely interpreted the words of the good and wise husbandman, or a rascal, who did not call people to destroy the weeds, but to keep and increase them.

The same thing happened to me, when I pointed out the injunction of the Gospel teaching concerning non-resistance to evil. This rule was prescribed by Christ, and after Him at all times by all His true disciples. But, either because they did not notice this rule, or because they did not understand it, or because the fulfilment of this rule appeared too difficult to them, this rule was forgotten as time went on, and matters came to such a pass, as at the present time, that this rule has come to seem to people to be something new, unheard-of, strange, and even mad. And to me happened the same that had happened to the man who pointed out to the people the old injunction of the good and wise husbandman, that the weeds ought not to be mowed down, but plucked out by the root.

Just as the owners of the meadow, intentionally passing over in silence the fact that the advice was not to the effect that the weeds were not to be destroyed, but that they should be destroyed in a sensible manner, said, "We will not listen to this man,—he is a madman, he tells us not to mow down the weeds, but to multiply them," so in reply to my words, that, in order according

to Christ's words to destroy evil, it is necessary not to resist it with violence, but to destroy it by the root with love, they said, "We will not listen to him,— he is a madman: he advises us not to resist evil, in order that the evil may crush us."

What I said was, that, according to Christ's teaching, evil cannot be rooted out with evil, that every resistance to evil with violence only increases the evil, that, according to Christ's teaching, evil is rooted out with good, "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, love your enemies, and you will have no enemy" (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles). I said that, according to Christ's teaching, man's whole life is a struggle with evil, a resistance to evil by means of reason and love, but that from all the means of resisting evil Christ excludes the one senseless means of resisting evil with evil, which consists in fighting evil by evil.

And these words of mine were understood to mean that I said that Christ said that we ought not to resist evil. And all those whose life is based on violence, and to whom, therefore, violence is dear, gladly accepted such an interpretation of my words and, with them, of the words of Christ, and they declared that the doctrine of non-resistance to evil was false, insipid, impious, and harmful. And people calmly continue, under the guise of destroying evil, to produce evil.



## PARABLE THE SECOND

SOME people dealt in flour, milk, and all kinds of eatables, and vying with one another, in their desire to earn as much as possible and grow quickly rich, they began more and more to mix in with their wares all kinds of cheap and harmful ingredients: they mixed the flour with bran and lime, the butter with oleomargarine, the milk with water and chalk. And so long as the commodities did not reach the consumers everything went well: the jobbers sold them to the wholesale dealers, and the wholesale dealers sold them to the retailers.

There were a large number of warehouses and shops, and the trade seemed to be brisk. The merchants were satisfied. But it was very unpleasant and dangerous for the city consumers, who did not themselves produce their provisions and so were obliged to purchase them.

The flour was bad, and so were the butter and the milk, but as none but adulterated products could be found in the markets of the cities, the city consumers continued to buy them, and accused themselves and the poor preparation of the food for the bad taste and their ill health, while the merchants kept putting more and more foreign cheap ingredients into the articles of food.

Thus it went on for quite awhile; the city dwellers suffered, and no one thought of expressing his dissatisfaction.

A countrywoman, who had always fed her family on home products, happened to come to the city. This woman had all her life prepared food, and although she

was not a famous cook, she knew how to bake bread and cook dinners.

This woman bought provisions in the city and began to bake and cook. The loaves did not bake well, but fell. The flat cakes prepared with the oleo did not taste good. She set milk, but got no cream. She guessed at once that the provisions were not good. She examined them, and her guess proved true: in the flour she found lime, in the butter oleomargarine, in the milk chalk. When she saw that all the provisions were adulterated, she went to the market and began loudly to arraign the merchants and to demand of them, either that they should keep in their shops good, nutritious, unadulterated provisions, or should stop trading and shut up their shops. But the merchants paid no attention to her, and told her that their articles were of the best quality, that the city had been buying them from them for several years, and that they even had medals, which they showed her on their signs. But the woman would not be quieted.

"I do not need any medals," she said, "but wholesome food, such as will not give my children any stomach-ache."

"Dear woman, you have apparently not seen any real flour and butter," the merchants said to her, pointing to the white, clean flour in lacquered flour-chests, to the miserable semblance of butter in beautiful dishes, and to the white liquid in shining transparent vessels.

"How can I help but know," said the woman, "since I have done nothing my whole life but prepare food for my children and eat it with them? Your articles are adulterated. Here is the proof," she said, showing them the spoiled loaf, the oleo in the cakes, and the sediment in the milk. "Your articles ought all to be thrown into the river or burned, and other, good ones ought to be got instead."

And the woman kept standing in front of the shops

and calling out to the purchasers, as they came along, and the purchasers began to be disturbed.

Seeing that the bold woman might interfere with their trade, the merchants said to the purchasers: "Gentlemen, see how insane this woman is: she wants to starve people to death. She tells us to throw all the eatables into the river or burn them. What are you going to eat, if we obey her and stop selling you provisions? Pay no attention to her,—she is a coarse countrywoman and does not know anything about provisions, and is attacking us only through envy. She is poor and wants us to be as poor as she."

Thus the merchants spoke to the crowd assembled, purposely concealing the fact that the woman did not wish to destroy the provisions, but only to substitute good provisions for the bad.

Then the crowd attacked the woman and began to call her names. And no matter how much the woman assured them all that she did not wish to destroy the provisions, having all her life done nothing but feed others and herself, but that she wished that all the people who took upon themselves the provisioning of men should not poison them with injurious articles under the guise of food,—no matter how long she spoke and what she said, no attention was paid to her, because it was decided that she wanted to deprive people of the food which was indispensable to them.

The same thing happened with me in relation to the science and art of our time. I subsisted all my life on this food, and, whether well or ill, tried to feed others whom I could reach with it. And since this is my food, and not an article of commerce or luxury, I know beyond any doubt when the food is food, and when it only resembles food. And when I tried the food which in our time is being sold in the intellectual market under the guise of science and art, and tried to feed on it the people whom

I love, I saw that a great part of this food was not genuine. And when I said that the science and art in which people trafficked in the intellectual market were oleomargarine, or at least adulterated with great quantities of substances which were foreign to true art and true science, and that I knew this, because the products bought by me in the intellectual market proved inedible both for me and for my neighbours, not only inedible, but absolutely injurious, they began to shout and yell at me, and to impress upon me that that was due to my not being learned and to my being unable to handle such profound subjects. But when I began to prove to them that the traders in these intellectual wares were themselves accusing one another of deception; when I reminded them that in all times much that was injurious and bad had been offered to people under the name of science and art, and that, therefore, the same danger confronted us in our time, that this was not a trifling matter, but a spiritual poisoning, which was many times more dangerous than a poisoning of the body, and that, therefore, we had with the greatest care to examine those spiritual products which were offered to us in the form of food, and cautiously to reject everything spurious and harmful,—when I began to tell them all that, no one, no one, not one man, in not a single article or book, controverted my arguments, but from all the shops they began to shout, as to that woman: “He is mad! He wants to destroy science and art, that which we live by. Beware of him, and pay no attention to him! Come this way, gentlemen! We have the latest imported goods!”

### PARABLE THE THIRD

SOME people were walking. They lost their road, so that they no longer walked over a smooth road, but over swamps, thorn-bushes, and brushwood, which barred their way, and it became harder and harder to move on.

Then the travellers divided into two parties: one of them decided to walk straight on in the direction in which they had been walking, assuring themselves and others that they had not lost the right direction and would after all arrive at the goal of their journey. The other party decided that, since the direction in which they were now going was obviously wrong, — or else they would have arrived at the goal of their journey, — it was necessary to look for the road, and that, to find it, it was necessary without stopping to move as fast as possible in every direction. All the travellers were divided among these two opinions: some decided to walk straight ahead, while the others decided to walk in all directions; but there was found one man who, not agreeing with either opinion, said that, before going in the direction in which they had been walking, or beginning to move rapidly in all directions, in the hope of thus finding what was right, they should first stop and reflect on their situation, and then only, after having reflected upon it, undertake one thing or another. But the travellers were so excited by their motion, so frightened at their situation, so much wished to console themselves with the hope that they had not lost their way, but had only for a little while got off the road and would soon find it again, and, above all, were so desirous by means of motion to drown their terror, that

this opinion was met with universal indignation, rebukes, and scorn on the part of the men of either party.

"This is the advice of weakness, cowardice, and indolence," said some.

"It is a fine way to reach the goal of a journey, — just to sit in one place and not move on!" said others.

"That is what we are people for, and strength is given us precisely for struggling and labouring, overcoming barriers, and not for faint-heartedly submitting to them," said others again.

And no matter how much the man who had separated from the majority told them that by moving in a false direction, without changing it, we certainly do not approach our goal, but get away from it; and that we shall as little reach our aim, if we toss from side to side; that the only means of arriving at our aim consists in this, that, calculating by the sun or stars what direction will bring us to our goal, we shall choose it and walk that way; but that, to do so, we must first stop, not in order to stand still, but in order to find the true path and then walk on it unswervingly, and that, for the purpose of doing all that, it was necessary for us first to stop and bethink ourselves, — no matter how much he said all that, no attention was paid to him.

The first party of the travellers went in the direction in which they had been walking, while the second began to toss from one side to another; but neither of them came nearer to their goal, or got out of the bushes and thorns, and both are still wandering about.

Precisely the same happened with me, when I tried to express my doubt that the path on which we have blundered into the dark forest of the labour question and into the bog of the never-ending armaments of the nations, which will swallow us up, is not quite the road over which we ought to walk, that it is very likely that we have lost the road, and that, therefore, it would be well

for us for a time to stop in the motion which is obviously wrong, and to reflect, first of all, according to those general and eternal principles of the truth revealed to us, whether we are going in the direction which we intended to take. Nobody answered this question, no one said: "We are not mistaken in the direction, and are not blundering, — of that we are sure for such and such reasons." Nor did one man say that perhaps we were mistaken, but that we possessed an unquestionable means for correcting this mistake, without interrupting our motion. Nobody said either thing. But they all grew angry and hastened to talk together so as to drown my solitary voice: "We are indolent and behind the times, as it is. And here he preaches to us laziness, indolence, non-action!" Some even added: "Inaction!" "Pay no attention to him, — move on and follow them!" cried those who think that salvation lies in following the direction once chosen, without changing it, no matter what that direction may be, and also those who think that salvation is to be found in tossing in all directions.

"What is the use of standing? Why think? Move on as fast as you can! Everything will come out all right!"

People have lost their way and suffer from that. It would seem that the first great effort of energy, which ought to be made, should be directed, not upon the intensification of the motion which has enticed us into that false position which we now hold, but upon its arrest. It would seem to be clear that only by stopping could we in some way come to understand our position and find the direction in which we must go in order to arrive at the true good, not of one man, nor of one class of men, but at the true universal good of humanity, toward which all men and each human heart in particular are striving. Well? People invent everything imaginable, except the one thing which can save, or, if not save them, at least

alleviate their situation, — namely, that they should stop for a moment and cease increasing their wretchedness with their false activity. The people feel the wretchedness of their situation and do everything in their power to be freed from it ; but the one thing which will certainly lighten their lot they positively decline to do, and the advice that they do so irritates them more than anything else.

If it were possible to be in doubt about our having lost our way, this relation to the advice that we bethink ourselves proves more obviously than anything else how hopelessly we have strayed and how great our despair is.



GOD OR MAMMON?

1895



# GOD OR MAMMON?

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No servant can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Luke xvi. 13).

He that is not with me is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matt. xii. 30).

ENORMOUS expanses of the best land, from which millions of now suffering families might have gained a sustenance, are covered with tobacco, grapes, barley, hops, and, above all else, rye and potatoes, which are used for the preparation of spirituous beverages, wine, beer, and, above all else, whiskey.

Millions of working people, who might have been producing useful things for men, are occupied in the manufacture of these articles. It has been figured out that in England one-tenth part of the working people are busy manufacturing whiskey and beer.

What are the consequences from the preparation and use of tobacco, wine, whiskey, and beer ?

There is an old story about a monk who disputed with the devil, saying that he would not let him into his cell, but that if he let him in, he would do the devil's bidding. The story tells how the devil assumed the form of a wounded raven, with a broken wing, who leaped about pitifully near the door of the monk's cell. The monk

took pity on the raven with the broken and bleeding wing and took him into his cell. Then the devil, upon entering the cell, offered the monk the choice of three crimes,—murder, adultery, or intoxication. The monk chose intoxication, thinking that in getting drunk he would only harm himself. But when he drank, he lost his reason, went to the village, and there succumbed to the temptation of a woman and committed adultery, and then murder, while defending himself against the husband, who came home and attacked him.

Thus are the consequences of drunkenness described in an ancient story, and such in reality are the consequences from the use of intoxicating liquors. A thief, a murderer, hardly ever commits a crime while in a sober state. From court records it may be seen that nine-tenths of all crimes are committed while the criminal is drunk. The best proof of the fact that the greater number of crimes are called forth by wine, may be found in the circumstance that in certain States of America, where wine and the importation of spirituous liquors are entirely prohibited, crimes have almost stopped: there are no thefts, no robberies, no murders, and the prisons stand empty.

Such is one of the consequences of the use of intoxicating liquors.

Another consequence is the harmful influence produced by intoxicating liquors upon the health of people. Not only does the use of intoxicating liquors produce especial, painful diseases, which are peculiar only to drinking people, but it has also been observed that drinking people who get sick with the common diseases do not convalesce so easily, so that the insurance companies always give preferred insurance on the lives of those who do not use intoxicating liquors.

Such is the second consequence of the use of intoxicating liquors.

The third, the most terrible, consequence of intoxicating

liquors is this, that liquor dims men's reason and conscience: the use of liquor makes people coarser, more stupid, and more evil.

What good is there then in the use of intoxicating liquors?

None at all.

The defenders of whiskey, wine, and beer used to assert that these beverages add health and strength, and warm a person up and cheer him. But it has now been proved beyond any doubt that that is not true. The intoxicating liquors do not add health, because they contain a powerful poison, — alcohol, — and the consumption of a poison cannot be anything but harmful.

It has been frequently proved that liquor does not add to a man's strength, by comparing for months and years the work of equally good workmen, of whom one drank and another did not, when it appeared that the one who did not drink did more and better work than the one who drank, and by this, that in those commands of soldiers which during expeditions receive whiskey, there are always more disabled men and stragglers than in those where no whiskey is distributed.

Similarly it has been proved that liquor does not warm a man up, and that the warmth from wine consumed does not stay long with one, and that after a short period of warmth a person experiences greater cold, so that prolonged cold is always harder on a drinker than on one who does not drink. Every year people freeze to death mainly from having warmed themselves up with liquor.

That the cheerfulness which comes from liquor is not real and not joyous, there is even no need of proving. Everybody knows what cheerfulness this is that comes from intoxication. One need but observe what is going on in the cities during the holidays in the restaurants, and in the villages during holidays, christenings, and weddings. This cheerfulness from intoxication always

ends in curses, fights, broken limbs, all kinds of crimes, and the degradation of human dignity.

Liquor gives neither health, nor strength, nor warmth, nor cheerfulness, but does people much harm. And so, it would seem, every rational, good man ought not only himself to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and from treating others to them, but also with all his strength to try to destroy the habit of the use of this worthless and harmful poison.

But, unfortunately, nothing of the kind takes place. People value so much their old customs and habits, and with such difficulty get rid of them, that there are in our time very many good, sensible people, who not only do not abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and from treating others to them, but even defend this use as best they can.

"It is not the wine that is blameworthy," they say, "but drunkenness. King David said, 'Wine gladdens the heart of man.' Christ in Cana of Galilee blessed the wine. If people did not drink, the government would lose its most important revenue. It is impossible to celebrate a holiday, a christening, a wedding without wine. How can we abstain from drinking wine in closing a bargain, in meeting a beloved guest?"

"Considering our work and labour, we cannot get along without drinking," says a poor labourer.

"If we drink only on special occasions and with moderation, we do not do any one any harm," say well-to-do people.

"A Russ taketh pleasure in drinking," said Prince Vladímir.

"No one suffers from our drinking but ourselves. And if we suffer, that is our business; we do not care to teach anybody, and do not want to be taught by any one; not with us did this begin, and not with us will it end," say unthinking people.

Thus speak drinkers of every condition and age, trying to justify themselves. But these justifications, which were of some value some decades ago, are now of no use. It was all very well to say this at a time when all thought that the use of intoxicating liquors added to a man's health and strength; when it was not yet known that liquor contained a poison which was always injurious to man's health; when men did not yet know of those terrible consequences of drunkenness, which now are before everybody.

It was possible to say this when there were not yet those hundreds and thousands of people who die an untimely death in terrible agonies, only because they have become accustomed to drinking intoxicating liquors and are no longer able to abstain from the use of them. It was all very well to say that wine was a harmless pleasure, when we did not yet see those hundreds and thousands of hungry, worn-out women and children, who suffer only because their husbands and fathers became addicted to the use of liquor. It was all very well to say so, so long as we did not yet see those hundreds and thousands of criminals, who fill the prisons, the places of deportation, and the mines, and of ruined lewd women, who fell into their state only thanks to liquor. It was all very well to say so, when we did not know that hundreds of thousands of people, who might have lived their lives in joy to themselves and to people, wasted their strength and their minds and their souls, because there exist intoxicating liquors, and they were tempted by them.

And so it is not possible in our day to say that the drinking or the non-drinking of liquor is a private matter, that we do not consider a moderate use of liquor to be harmful for us and do not wish to teach any one or be taught by any one, that this did not begin with us and will not end with us. It is impossible to say so now; the

use of liquor or the abstinence from it is in our time not a private, but a common matter.

Now all people — whether they wish it or not — are divided into two camps: some struggle against the use of the worthless poison, the intoxicating liquors, with words and deeds, by not using liquor themselves and not treating others to it; others in words, and still more powerfully by their example, maintain the use of this poison; and this struggle is now going on in every country, and has been particularly virulent in Russia for the last twenty years.

“When ye did not know, there was no sin on you,” said Christ. Now we know what we are doing and whom we serve, when we use liquor and treat others to it, and so, if, knowing the sin of the use of liquor, we continue to drink and treat others to it, we have no justification.

Let no one say that it is impossible not to drink and not to treat others on certain occasions, — at holidays, weddings, and similar occasions, — that everybody does so, that our fathers and grandfathers did so, and that, therefore, we cannot act differently from the rest. It is not true: our forefathers and fathers gave up those evil and harmful habits, the evil of which became obvious to them; even so we are obliged to give up the evil which has become obvious in our time. But that liquor has in our time become a terrible evil, of that there cannot be any doubt. How, then, knowing that the use of intoxicating liquors is an evil, which ruins hundreds of thousands of men, shall I treat to this evil my friends who have called on me on a holiday, at a christening, or a wedding?

It has not always been as it is now, but everything has changed from worse to better, and this change did not take place of its own accord, but because people did what their reason and conscience demanded of them. Even now our reason and conscience demand in the most



emphatic manner that we should stop drinking liquor and treating others to it.

It is generally considered right to condemn and despise those drunkards who in saloons and restaurants drink until they lose their reason and are so addicted to liquor that they cannot contain themselves and spend everything they have for drinks. But those who take their liquor home, drink daily in moderate quantities, and treat their guests to it on proper occasions, are considered to be good, respectable men, who are not doing anything wrong. But it is these people that are more worthy of condemnation than the drunkards.

The drunkards became such only because the non-drunkards, without doing any harm to themselves, taught them how to drink liquor, — tempted them with their own example. The drunkards would never become such, if they did not see honourable people, who are respected by everybody, drink liquor and treat others to it. A young man, who never drank any liquor, will learn the taste and the action of liquor on a holiday or at a wedding of those honourable people, who are no drunkards, but who drink and treat their guests on certain occasions.

And so he who drinks liquor, no matter how moderately he may drink, no matter on what especial, generally accepted occasions he may treat people to it, commits a great sin. He tempts those who are not to be tempted, of whom it says, "Woe unto him that shall offend one of these little ones."

They say: "Not with us did it begin, and not with us will it end." Yes, it will end with us, if only we shall understand that drinking or not drinking liquor is not a matter of indifference for each of us; that with every bottle that we buy, with every glass of wine that we drink, we contribute to that terrible, devilish affair, from which the best human forces perish; and that, on the

contrary, by abstaining from liquor in our own case and putting a stop to the senseless habit of using liquor on holidays and at weddings and christenings, we perform a work of vast importance,—the work of our soul, the work of God. Let us but understand this, and drunkenness will end with us.

And so, no matter who you, reader, may be,—whether a young man just preparing for life, or a grown person, just established in life, an adult householder, or an aging man,—when the time of accounting for your acts is near,—whether you be rich or poor, famous or unknown,—whoever you may be, you can no longer remain in the middle between the two camps, you must inevitably choose one thing or the other,—to counteract drunkenness or contribute to it,—to serve God or mammon.

If you are a young man, and have never drunk, have never yet poisoned yourself with liquor, hold in esteem your purity and freedom from offence. If you have already succumbed to the offence, it will be harder for you to overcome it. Do not believe that liquor increases cheerfulness. Cheerfulness, true, good cheerfulness, is proper in your years, and liquor will only change your true, innocent cheerfulness into a drunken, mad, vicious cheerfulness. Above all else, beware of liquor, because in your years it is hardest to abstain from other offences, while liquor weakens the power of reason, which is so necessary in your years, and which counteracts the offences. Having drunk liquor, you will do something that you did not even think of in your sober mood. Why should you subject yourself to such a terrible danger?

But if you are a grown person, who have already made a habit of intoxicating liquors, or who are beginning to get used to them,—give up that terrible habit, while there is still time, or else, before you look around, it will take possession of you, and you may become just like those hopelessly ruined drunkards, who have perished

from liquor. They all began like you. If you should be able all your life to stick to a moderate use of intoxicating liquors and did not yourself become a drunkard, you, by continuing to drink liquor and treating others to it, may cause your younger brother, your wife, your children, to become drunkards, if they have not the strength to stop at a moderate use of liquor. Above all else, you must understand that upon you, as a person in the most powerful age of life, a master or mistress of the house, the guide of life, rests the duty of guiding the lives of your family. And so, if you know that liquor does not do any good, causes great evil to men, you are not only not obliged slavishly to repeat what your forefathers did, — to use liquor, to buy it and treat others to it, but, — on the contrary, are obliged to set aside this custom and substitute another for it.

Be not afraid that the abolition of the habit of drinking wine on holidays and at christenings and weddings will very much offend or provoke people. In many places people are already beginning to do this, by substituting savoury food and non-alcoholic drinks for the customary liquor; and it is only at first that people, only the most stupid of them, marvel, for they soon get used to this and approve of it.

But if you are an old man, of an age when, sooner or later, you shall have to account to God how you served Him, and you, instead of turning inexperienced young men away from liquor, — a terrible evil, which you could not help but notice during your life, — tempt others with your example, by drinking liquor or treating others to it, you are committing a great sin.

“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.”

If people only comprehended that in the matter of the use of liquor there is now no middle way, and whether

we want to or not, we must choose one or the other: to serve God or mammon.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”

**SHAME !**

**1895**



# SHAME!

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IN the twenties of the nineteenth century the officers of the Seménovski Regiment, the flower of the youths of that day, for the most part Masons and subsequently Decembrists, decided not to use any corporal punishment in their regiment, and, in spite of the strict demands of military service at that time, the regiment continued to be a model one, even without the application of corporal punishment.

One of the commanders of a company of the Seménovski Regiment, upon meeting one day Sergyéy Ivánovich Muravév, one of the best men of that, and indeed of any, time, told him about one of his soldiers, a thief and drunkard, saying that such a soldier could not be brought to his senses in any other way than by means of the rod. Sergyéy Muravév did not agree with him and offered to take the soldier in his company.

The transfer was made, and the soldier in the very first days stole a pair of boots from his comrade, and with the proceeds from the sale of them got drunk, and acted riotously. Sergyéy Ivánovich called together the company and, calling the soldier to the front, said to him: "You know that in my company soldiers are not beaten or flogged, and I will not have you punished. For the boots which you stole I will pay with my own money, and I beg you, not for my sake, but for your own sake, to

reflect upon your life and to change it." And, having given the soldier friendly instructions, Sergyéy Ivánovich dismissed him.

The soldier again got drunk and had a fight. And again he was not punished, but only admonished: "You will only harm yourself the more; but if you mend your ways, you will be better off for it. For this reason I ask you not to do such things."

The soldier was so surprised at this new way of being treated that he changed completely and became a model soldier.

The narrator of this story, Sergyéy Ivánovich's brother, Matvyéy Ivánovich, who, like his brother and all the best men of the time, considered corporal punishment to be a disgraceful remainder of barbarism, disgraceful not so much for the man punished, as for the men punishing, never could keep back tears of emotion and transport, when he spoke of it, and it was equally impossible to restrain tears, when listening to him.

Thus corporal punishment was viewed by cultured Russians seventy-five years ago. Now seventy-five years have passed, and in our time the grandchildren of these men preside in the capacity of County Council chiefs in courts and calmly discuss the question whether rods are to be administered or not, and how many rods are to be given to such and such an adult, a father of a family, often a grandfather.

But the leaders among these grandchildren sitting in committees and County Council assemblies hand in memorandums, addresses, and petitions, asking, in the name of hygienic and pedagogical purposes, that not all the peasants, but only those who have not finished a course in a popular school, be subject to flogging.

An enormous change has taken place in the midst of the so-called higher cultured class. The men of the twenties, considering corporal punishment to be a dis-



graceful act for themselves, found a way for abolishing it in the army, where it was thought to be indispensable ; but the men of our time calmly apply it, not to the soldiers, but to all men of one of the classes of the Russian people, and cautiously, diplomatically, in committees and assemblies, with every imaginable excuse and circumlocution, address and petition the government as to this, that the punishment with rods does not comply with the demands of hygiene and so must be limited, or that it would be desirable to flog only such peasants as have not finished a course in the rudiments, or that the peasants who are included in the manifesto on the occasion of the emperor's marriage may be exempted from corporal punishment.

Obviously a terrible change has taken place in the midst of the so-called higher Russian society, and, what is most remarkable, this change has taken place at a time when in the very class, which it is assumed necessary to make submit to the disgusting, coarse, and stupid torture of flogging, there has in the last seventy-five years, especially in the last thirty-five years, since the liberation, taken place just such a vast change, only in the opposite direction.

While the higher, ruling classes have coarsened and morally fallen to such an extent that they have legalized flogging and calmly discuss the same, there has in the peasant class taken place such an uplifting of the mental and moral level that the application of corporal punishment to this class appears to the men of this class not only as a physical, but also as a moral torture.

I have heard and read of cases of suicide among peasants condemned to rods, and I cannot refuse to believe this, because I saw myself an ordinary young peasant, at the mere mention in the township court of the possibility of administering corporal punishment to him, grow as pale as a sheet and lose his voice ; I saw also another peasant,

of about forty years of age, who was condemned to corporal punishment, burst out weeping, when, in reply to my question whether the decree of the court was carried out, he had to answer that it was.

I know also of a case where an acquaintance of mine, a respectable middle-aged peasant, who was condemned to be flogged for having, as usual, called the stárosta names, without paying attention to the fact that the stárosta wore the insignia, was taken to the township office, and from there to the shed where the punishment is administered. The watchman came with the rods, and the peasant was told to take off his clothes.

"Parmén Ermílych, I have a married son," said the peasant, turning to the township elder, and shaking with his whole body. "Can't this be omitted? It is a sin."

"The government, Petróvich, — I should gladly, — what is to be done?" replied the embarrassed elder.

Petróvich took off his clothes and lay down.

"Christ has suffered and told us to suffer," he said.

As the scribe who was present told me, everybody's arms trembled, and nobody dared to look into his neighbour's eyes, feeling that they were doing something terrible. And these people it is assumed indispensable and apparently useful for some one to flog like beasts, — indeed, even animals are not allowed to be tortured.

For the good of our Christian and enlightened state it is indispensable to subject to a most insipid, indecent, and offensive punishment, not all the members of this Christian enlightened state, but only one of its classes, the most industrious, useful, moral, and numerous.

The highest authorities of an enormous Christian state have not been able nineteen centuries after Christ to invent something more useful, clever, and moral for the counteraction of violation of laws than that the people who have violated the laws, grown men, and sometimes

old men, be undressed, thrown on the floor, and beaten with rods on their backsides.<sup>1</sup>

And the men of our time, who consider themselves to be leaders, the grandsons of the men who seventy-five years ago destroyed capital punishment, now most humbly and quite seriously ask the minister or some one else not to subject to flogging the adult Russians so much, because the doctors find this unhealthy, not to subject to flogging those who have finished a course, and to free from flogging those who should be flogged immediately after the emperor's marriage. But the wise government keeps profound silence in response to such frivolous requests or even prohibits them.

But is it possible to ask about these things? Can there be a question about them? There are certain acts, whether they be committed by private individuals, or by governments, which cannot be discussed coolly, condemning the commission of these acts only under certain conditions. And the flogging of adults from one of the classes of the Russian nation in our time, amidst our meek and enlightened Christian people, belongs to this class of acts. It is not right for the abatement of the transgression of all divine and human laws diplomatically to approach the government on the score of hygiene, school education, or the manifesto. Such things must either not be mentioned at all, or must be talked about as to their essence and always with contempt and horror. To ask that only such peasants as have finished the rudiments be not switched over their bare hips, is the same as if, where the punishment of an adulterous woman was that she be taken naked through the city, one should ask that the punishment be applied only to those women who do not know how to knit stockings, or something like that.

<sup>1</sup> Why this particular stupid, savage method of causing pain, and no other? Why not stick pins into the shoulder or some other part of the body, compress the hands or feet in a vise, or something like that? — *Author's Note.*

About such things people cannot "ask most humbly" and "prostrate themselves before one's feet," and so forth; such things can and must be only arraigned. Such things must be arraigned, because these things, when the aspect of legality is given to them, only disgrace us all, who live in the state where such acts are committed. Indeed, if the flogging of the peasants is a law, this law is made for me as much as for anybody, to secure my peace and well-being, but this cannot be admitted.

I do not want and am not able to recognize a law which violates all the divine and human laws, and I cannot imagine myself of one accord with those who write and confirm such crimes under the form of law.

If we have to speak at all of this monstrousness, we can say only this, that there can be no such law, that no ukases, Mirrors of Law, signatures, or command of his Majesty can make a law of a crime, and that, on the contrary, the vesting of such a crime (as this, that the adults of but one, the best class, may at the will of another, a worse class, — that of the gentry and officials, — be subjected to an indecent, savage, disgusting punishment) with the form of law proves better than anything else that where such an imaginary legalization of a crime is possible no laws exist, but only savage arbitrariness of rude power.

If we must speak at all of the corporal punishment which is administered to but one, the peasant class, we must not defend the rights of the County Council assembly or complain to the minister of the governor who protested against the solicitations about stopping the flogging of those who know how to read, or complain to the senate of the minister, or complain still higher up of the senate, as was proposed by the Tambóv County Council, but must never stop crying and shouting that the application of this savage punishment, which is no longer used in the case of children, to one, the best class of Russians, is a

disgrace for all those who take part in it directly or indirectly.

Petróvich, who lay down to receive the rods, making the sign of the cross and saying, "Christ suffered and told us to suffer," forgave his tormentors and after the rods remained what he had been. The torture accomplished upon him could have had but one result, that of making him despise the power which can prescribe such punishments. But on many young men not only the punishment itself, but frequently the mere acknowledgment that it is possible, has the effect of lowering their moral sense and provoking either desperation or brutality. But this is not yet the chief harm of this monstrousness. The chief harm consists in the mental condition of those men who establish, permit, and prescribe this illegality, those men who use it as a threat, and all those who live in the conviction that such a violation of all justice and humanity is necessary for a good, regular life. What a terrible maiming there must be in the brains and hearts of such men, frequently young men, who, as I myself have heard, assert with an aspect of profound wisdom that it is impossible not to flog the peasant, and that it is better for the peasant that he should be flogged.

It is these people who are to be pitied most for the bestiality into which they have fallen and in which they abide.

Therefore the liberation of the Russian people from the corrupting influence of the legalized crime is in every way an affair of vast importance. This liberation will not take place when those who have finished a course, or any other peasants, or even all the peasants, with the exception of one single peasant, shall be exempted from corporal punishment, but only when the ruling classes will recognize their sin and shall meekly submit to it.

*December 14, 1895.*



PREFACE TO CARPENTER'S  
ARTICLE, "MODERN SCI-  
ENCE"

1898





## PREFACE TO CARPENTER'S ARTICLE, "MODERN SCI- ENCE"

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Παντὶ λόγῳ λόγος ἑσὺς ἀντικείμεται.

I THINK that the following article by Carpenter on modern science can be of especial use in our Russian society, in which more than in any other European society there exists the wide-spread and deep-rooted superstition according to which it is thought that for the good of humanity there is no need whatever of the diffusion of religious and moral knowledge, but only of the study of the experimental sciences, and that the knowledge of these sciences satisfies all the spiritual demands of humanity.

It can easily be seen what evil influence (just like that of the religious superstitions) must be exerted upon the moral life of men by this gross superstition. And so the diffusion of the ideas of the writers who assume a critical attitude toward experimental science and its method is particularly desirable for our society.

Carpenter proves that neither astronomy, nor physics, nor chemistry, nor biology, nor sociology gives us a real knowledge of reality, that all the laws discovered by these sciences are only generalizations, which have an approximate significance as laws,—and that, too, only if we neglect or ignore the other conditions,—and that even

these laws appear to us as laws only because we discover them in a sphere which is so remote from us in time and space that we cannot see the discrepancy between these laws and reality.

Besides, Carpenter points out to us the fact that the method of science, which consists in the explanation of phenomena that are near and important to us by more remote phenomena, which are a matter of indifference to us, is a false method, which can never lead us to the desired results.

"Each science," he says, "has been reduced to its lowest terms. Ethics has been made a question of utility and inherited experience. Political economy has been exhausted of all conceptions of justice between man and man, of charity, affection, and the instinct of solidarity; and has been founded on its lowest discoverable factor, namely, self-interest. Biology has been denuded of the force of personality in plants, animals, and men; the 'self' here has been set aside, and the attempt made to reduce the science to a question of chemical and cellular affinities, protoplasm, and the laws of osmose. Chemical affinities, again, and all the wonderful phenomena of physics are reduced to a flight of atoms; and the flight of atoms (and of astronomic orbs as well) is reduced to the laws of dynamics."

It is assumed that the reduction of the questions of a higher order to those of a lower order will resolve the questions of the higher order. But this elucidation is never brought about, and what takes place is this, that, descending in our investigations lower and lower, from most essential questions to less essential ones, science finally arrives at a sphere which is absolutely foreign to man and is only contiguous to him, and upon this sphere it arrests its attention, leaving all the most important questions of man without any solution whatever.

What takes place is very much what a man would do,

who, wishing to understand the significance of an object before him, instead of getting nearer to it and viewing and feeling it from all sides, should go farther and farther away from the object, and finally should get away to such a distance that all the peculiarities of colour and all the unevenness of relief are destroyed and nothing but the outlines, which distinguish it from the horizon, are left, and here should begin to describe this object in detail, on the assumption that now he had a very clear conception about it, and that this concept, formed at such a distance, would contribute to the complete comprehension of the object. It is this self-deception that is partly dispelled by Carpenter's criticism, which shows, in the first place, that the knowledge which science gives us in the field of the natural sciences is only convenient methods of generalization, but by no means the representation of reality, and, in the second place, that that method of science, by which the phenomena of the higher order are reduced to phenomena of the lower order, will never bring us to the explanation of the phenomena of the higher order.

But even without anticipating the question as to whether experimental science will with its method ever bring us to the solution of the problems of life most important for humanity, the activity itself of experimental science in relation to the eternal and most legitimate demands of humanity startles us by its incorrectness.

Men have to live. To live, they must know how to live. And all men — whether ill or well — have always found this out, and, in conformity with this knowledge, have lived and moved on, and this knowledge of how men should live has since the days of Solomon, Moses, Confucius, always been regarded as science, as the science of the sciences. It is only in our day that the science as to how to live is not at all a science, and that only experimental science, which begins with mathematics and ends with sociology, is the real science.

From this results a strange misunderstanding.

A simple, clever working man, employing the ancient reasoning, which at that is common sense, assumes that if there are people who study all their lives, and who, in consideration of their being fed and supported by him, do his thinking for him, these men are no doubt busy studying what people need, and he expects science to solve for him those questions on which depend his good and the good of all men. He waits for science to teach him how to live, how to treat the members of his family, his neighbours, people of other nations, how to struggle with his passions, what to believe in and what not to believe in, and many other things. And what does science say to all these questions of his?

It announces to him triumphantly how many millions of miles it is from the sun to the earth, with what rapidity light passes through space, how many millions of vibrations the ether makes for light and how many vibrations air makes for sound; it tells him about the chemical composition of the Milky Way, about the new element, helium, about microcosms and their evacuations, about those points in the arm where electricity is centred, about X-rays, and such things.

"But I do not need any of these things," says the simple, sensible man. "I want to know how to live."

"What do I care what you want to know?" science replies to this. "What you ask about belongs to sociology. But before answering sociological questions, we have to answer zoological, botanical, physiological, in general biological, questions, but to answer these questions we must first solve physical, then chemical questions, and we have to come to an agreement as to what is the form of the infinitely small atoms, and in what manner the imponderable and inelastic ether transmits motion."

And people, especially those who sit on other men's backs, and who, therefore, find it convenient to wait, are

satisfied with such answers, and sit "flapping their eyes" in expectation of what is promised; but a simple, sensible working man, on whose back are sitting those men who busy themselves with science, the whole vast mass of men, all humanity, cannot be satisfied with such answers, and naturally asks in perplexity, "When shall that be? We have no time to wait. You yourselves say that you will find it out in a few generations. But we live now: to-day we are alive, and to-morrow we shall die, and so we must know how to live the life we are now in. Teach us."

"Foolish, ignorant man," science answers him. "He does not understand that science does not serve utility, but science studies what is subject to investigation, and cannot choose its subjects for study. Science studies *everything*. Such is the property of science."

And the men of science are actually convinced that the property of busying oneself with trifles, neglecting that which is more essential and important, is not their property, but the property of science; but the simple, sensible man begins to suspect that this property does not belong to science, but to men who are inclined to busy themselves with trifles, ascribing an important significance to these trifles.

"Science studies *everything*," say the men of science. But *everything* is too much; *everything* is the infinite number of objects, — it is impossible to study *everything* at once. As a lantern cannot at once illumine everything, but illumines only the one spot toward which it is directed, or that direction in which the bearer carries it, so also science cannot study everything, but inevitably studies only that toward which its attention is directed. And as a lantern illumines most powerfully the nearest spot to it and less and less well the objects more and more removed from it, and does not at all illumine those to which the light does not reach, even so human science, no matter what it may be, has always investigated in the

most thorough manner what to the investigators seems to be most important, less thoroughly what represents itself to them as less important, and entirely neglects the remaining infinite number of objects. But what has determined for men what is very important, what less important, and what is not important at all, is the common understanding, by the men who have busied themselves with science, as to what constitutes the meaning and aim of life, that is, religion.

But the present men of science, recognizing no religion, and so having no grounds on which to pick out, according to their degree of importance, the subjects of study, and to separate them from less important subjects, and finally from that infinite number of subjects which, on account of the limitation of the human mind and the infinitude of these subjects, will always remain unstudied, have formed for themselves a theory,—“science for science’s sake,”—according to which science does not study what men need, but *everything*.

Indeed, experimental science studies everything, but not in the sense of the aggregate of all subjects, but in the sense of disorder, a chaos in the distribution of the subjects studied; that is, science does not study preferably what is most needed by men, and less so what is needed less, and not at all what is entirely useless, but it studies everything, anything. Though there exist Comte’s classification of the sciences and other classifications, these classifications do not guide them in the selection of subjects for study; what directs the selection is the human weaknesses to which the men of science are as prone as anybody else. Thus in reality the men of experimental science do not study everything, as they imagine and affirm, but what is most advantageously and most easily studied. What is most advantageously studied is, what can contribute to the welfare of those higher classes to which the men who busy themselves with the sciences

belong ; and it is easier to study everything which does not live. And so do the men of experimental science do : they study books, monuments, dead bodies.

This study they consider to be true "science." Thus what in our time passes for true "science," the only "science" (as the only book worthy of that name was called the "Bible"), is not the consideration and investigation of how to make the lives of men better and happier, but the collection and copying from many books into one of what has before been written by people about a certain subject, or the pouring of a liquid from one glass into another, the artificial splitting of microscopic apparatus, the cultivation of bacteria, the cutting up of frogs and dogs, the investigation of X-rays, the theory of numbers, the chemical composition of the stars.

But all those sciences which have for their aim the making human life better and happier, — the religious, moral, social sciences, — are not considered by the ruling science to be sciences, and are left to the theologians, philosophers, jurists, historians, political economists, who, under the guise of scientific investigations, are interested only in proving that the existing order of life, the advantages of which they enjoy, is precisely the one that ought to exist, and so ought not to be changed, but, on the contrary, ought to be supported in every possible way.

To say nothing of theology and jurisprudence, the most advanced of this kind of sciences, political economy, is most striking in this respect. The most widely disseminated political economy (that of Marx), in recognizing the existing order of life to be such as it ought to be, not only does not demand of men any change in this order, that is, does not show them how they ought to live in order that their situation be improved, but, on the contrary, demands the intensification of the cruelty of the existing order, in order that there may be a realization of those more than doubtful predictions as to what must

happen, if the people continue to live as badly as they are living now. And, as always happens, the lower a human activity descends, the more it departs from what it ought to be, the more does its self-confidence grow. The same has happened with science in our time. True science is never recognized by the contemporaries, but, on the contrary, is for the most part persecuted. Nor can it be otherwise. True science points out to men their errors, and new, untried paths of life. Either is disagreeable to the ruling part of society. But the present science not only does not contradict the tastes and demands of the ruling part of society, but is in full agreement with them: it satisfies idle curiosity, makes people marvel, and promises them an increase of enjoyments. And so, while everything truly great is quiet, modest, imperceptible, the science of our time knows no limits to its self-laudation.

"All the former methods were faulty, and so everything which formerly used to be regarded as science is a deception, error, trifles; our method is the only true method, and our science is the only true science. The progress of our science is such that thousands of years have not done what we have accomplished in the last hundred years. Proceeding on the same path, our science will in the future solve all questions and will make all humanity happy. Our science is the most important activity in the world, and we, the men of science, are the most important and necessary men in the world."

Thus think and speak the men of science of our time and the crowd is with them, whereas at no time and with no nation did science, all science in all its significance, stand on such a low level as at present. One part of it, the one which ought to study that which makes human life good and happy, is busy justifying the present bad order of life, while the other busies itself with the solution of questions of idle curiosity.



"What? Of idle curiosity?" I hear voices, which are indignant at such blasphemy. "And what about electricity, and telephones, and all the perfections of mechanics? To say nothing of their scientific significance, see what practical results they have produced. Man has overcome Nature, has subdued her forces to himself, and so forth."

"But all the practical results of the victory over Nature have so far — and for a long time — been applied to factories, which are injurious to the masses, to engines of destruction, to the increase of luxury and debauchery," replies a simple, sensible man, "and so the victory of man over Nature has not only not increased men's good, but has, on the contrary, made their condition worse."

If the structure of society is bad, as ours is, where a small number of men rule over the majority and oppress them, every victory over Nature will inevitably serve only for the increase of this power and this oppression. And so it is.

In connection with a science which does not take its object to be the study of how men should live, but the study of what is, and so is preëminently busy investigating dead bodies and leaves the structure of human society such as it is, no improvements, no victories over Nature can improve the condition of men.

"And medicine? Do you forget the beneficent advancement of medicine? And the inoculation of bacteria? And the modern operations?" exclaim, as usual, the defenders of the science of the last resort, adducing the advancement of medicine in proof of the fruitfulness of all science.

"We can by means of inoculation prevent diseases, and cure, we can perform painless operations, — cut up the internal organs, clean them, — we can straighten hunchbacks," generally say the defenders of science, for some reason assuming that one child cured of diphtheria

among all those children, who annually die in Russia to the number of fifty per cent., and in asylums to the number of eighty per cent., ought to convince people of the beneficence of science in general.

The structure of our life is such that not only children, but even the majority of adults, through bad food, injurious labour above their strength, bad housing, insufficient clothing, and want, do not live one-half of the years which they ought to live; the structure of life is such that infantile diseases, consumption, syphilis, alcoholism are taking possession of an ever greater number of men, that a great portion of men's labours is taken from them for preparations for war, that every ten or twenty years millions of men are destroyed by war, — and all this is due to the fact that science, instead of spreading among men correct religious, moral, and social ideas, in consequence of which all these calamities may naturally be destroyed, busies itself, on the one hand, with the justification of the existing order, and, on the other, with toys; and in proof of the fruitfulness of science we are told that it cures one-thousandth part of those diseased who fall sick for the very reason that science does not perform its proper work.

If only a small portion of those efforts, of that attention, and of that labour, which science wastes on those trifles with which it busies itself, were directed by it upon the establishment among men of regular religious, moral, social, even hygienic ideas, there would not be even one-hundredth part of those diphtherias, diseases of the womb, hunchbacks, on the cure of which science prides itself so much, effecting these cures in its clinics, the luxury of whose establishment cannot be diffused among all men.

It is the same as though men, who had ploughed a field badly and sowed bad seed in it, should walk through this field and cure the broken stalks, which grew up among the sickly ears, all the time treading down all the other stalks, and should adduce this their art of curing

the sickly stalks as a proof of their knowledge of agriculture.

For our science to become science and to be truly useful, it must first of all renounce its experimental method, according to which it regards as its business only the study of what is, and should return to the one rational and fruitful comprehension of science, according to which the object of its study is, how men should live. In this does the purpose and meaning of science consist; but the study of what is can be the object of science only to the extent to which this study contributes to the comprehension of how men should live.

It is this recognition of the insufficiency of experimental science and of the necessity of acquiring a different method that is pointed out in the present article by Carpenter.



CARTHAGO DELEND A EST

1898



## CARTHAGO DELENDA EST

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*La Vita Internazionale* and *L'Humanité Nouvelle* sent me the following letter :

“MONSIEUR : — Dans le but d'être utile au développement des idées humanitaires de la civilisation *La Vita Internazionale* (Milan), avec l'appui de *L'Humanité Nouvelle* (Paris et Bruxelles), a cru devoir s'intéresser au difficile problème qui dernièrement s'est montré dans toute sa gravité et son importance à cause de la délicate question pour laquelle la France et le monde entier se sont passionnés si vivement : nous voulons parler du problème de la guerre et du militarisme. A cette fin, nous prions tous ceux qui en Europe dans la politique, les sciences, les arts, dans le mouvement ouvrier, parmi les militaires mêmes occupent la place la plus éminente, de contribuer à cette œuvre hautement civilisatrice en nous envoyant les réponses au questionnaire suivant :

“1. La guerre parmi les nations civilisées est-elle encore voulue par l'histoire, par le droit, par le progrès ?

“2. Quels sont les effets intellectuels, moraux, physiques, économiques, politiques, du militarisme ?

“3. Quelles sont les solutions qu'il convient de donner, dans l'intérêt de l'avenir de la civilisation mondiale, aux graves problèmes de la guerre et du militarisme ?

“4. Quels sont les moyens conduisant le plus rapidement possible à ces solutions ?”

I cannot conceal that feeling of disgust, indignation, and even despair, which this letter provoked in me. People of our Christian world, enlightened, clever, good men, who profess the law of love and of brotherhood, who regard murder as a terrible crime, who, with few exceptions, are unable to kill an animal, all these people suddenly, under certain conditions, when these crimes are called war, not only recognize destruction, pillage, and the murder of men to be right and lawful, but themselves contribute to this pillage and these murders, prepare themselves for them, take part in them, and pride themselves on them. With this the same phenomenon is always repeated, namely this, that a vast majority of men, all the working people, those who do the pillaging and the murdering and bear the whole weight of this business, do not plan, or prepare, or wish these murders, and take part in them against their will, only because they are placed in such a position and are so minded that it seems to them, to each of them individually, that they will fare worse, if they refuse to take part in these robberies and murders and in the preparations for them; but it is only a very insignificant minority, which lives in luxury and idleness upon the labours of the working people, that plans and prepares those robberies and murders, and compels the working people to commit them. This deception has been taking place for a long time, but of late the impudence of the deceivers has reached the farthest limit: a large portion of the products of labour are taken away from the working people and are used for the preparations for these robberies and murders. In all the constitutional governments of Europe, the labourers themselves, all without exception, are called upon to take part in these robberies and murders, the international relations are intentionally made more and more complex, so as to lead up to war, peaceful countries are robbed without any cause, every year people are robbed and killed somewhere,



and all men live in constant fear of universal mutual pilage and murder. It would seem to be obvious that if such a phenomenon takes place, it is due to this, that the greater masses are deceived by the minority, to which this deception is profitable, and that, therefore, the first thing those who want to free people from the calamities of these mutual robberies and murders ought to do is to lay open the deception in which the masses are, to show the masses how the deception is accomplished, how it is maintained, and how to be freed from it. But the enlightened men of Europe do nothing of the kind: instead of it they, under the pretext of coöperating with the establishment of peace, at first gather in one city of Europe, then in another, and seat themselves with most serious faces at tables and discuss in what way best to persuade the robbers, who live by their trade, to stop committing robberies and become peaceful citizens, and then they put profound questions: the first, as to whether history, right, progress demand war, as though the fictions which we invent can demand of us a departure from the fundamental moral law of our life; the second question,—as to what can be the consequences of war, as though there can be any doubt in this, that the consequences of war will always be universal calamity and universal corruption; and, finally, the third question, how to solve the problem of war, as though there existed a difficult problem about how to free deceived men from the deception which we see clearly.

This is terrible. We see, for example, that healthy, peaceable, often happy people from year to year frequent gambling-dens, such as Monte Carlo, and leave there, for the advantage of the keepers of these dens, their health, their peace, their honour, and frequently their lives. We are sorry for these men; we see clearly that the deception to which these people are subjected consists in those temptations by means of which the players are enticed,

in the inequality of the chances, and in the infatuation of the players, who know that in general they will be losers, but none the less hope that they will at least once be more fortunate than others. All that is perfectly clear. And here, instead of freeing people from these calamities, instead of pointing out to them the temptations to which they are subjected, the certainty of their losses, the immorality of the play, which is based on the expectation of other people's misfortunes, we meet with distinguished men in sessions and discuss the questions as to how to arrange matters so that the keepers of the gambling establishments shall voluntarily close their institutions, we write books about this, and ask ourselves questions as to whether history, right, and progress do not demand the existence of gambling establishments, and what may be the consequences of roulette, — the economic, intellectual, moral consequences, etc.

If a man drinks, and I tell him that he can himself stop drinking and must do so, there is some hope that he will pay attention to me; but if I tell him that his drunkenness forms a complex and difficult problem, which we, the learned, will try to solve in our meetings, all the probabilities are that he, waiting for the solution of the problem, will continue to drink. The same is true of the false and intricate scientific, external means for the cessation of war, like the international tribunals, the court of arbitration, and other similar foolish things, when we with them keep in abeyance the simplest and most essential means for the cessation of war, which is only too obvious to anybody. For people who do not need war not to fight we need no international tribunals, no solution of questions, but only that the people who are subject to deception should awaken and free themselves from that spell under which they are. This means for the abolition of war consists in this, that the men who do not need war, who consider a participation in war to be a sin,

should stop fighting. This means has been preached since the most remote times by Christian writers, — Tertullian, Origen, and by the Paulicians and their continuators, the Mennonites, the Quakers, the Herrnhuters; about this means wrote Dymond, Garrison, Ballou; it will soon be twenty years during which I have in every way elucidated the sin, harmfulness, and senselessness of military service. This means was applied long ago, and has been applied with particular frequency, both by separate individuals in Austria, Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, Sweden, Russia, and by whole societies, such as the Quakers, Mennonites, Nazarenes, and of late the Dukhobors, a whole fifteen thousand of whom have now for three years been struggling against the mighty Russian government, in spite of all the sufferings to which they are subjected, without acceding to its demands that they take part in the crimes of military service.

But the enlightened friends of peace not only do not propose this means, — they cannot even bear the mention of it; and when they hear of it, they make it appear that they do not notice it, or, if they notice it, they shrug their shoulders with a significant mien, expressing compassion for those uneducated and senseless people, who use such an inefficacious, stupid means, when they have such a good means, which consists in throwing salt on the tail of the bird which you want to catch, that is, in persuading the governments, which live only by violence and deception, to renounce this violence and deception.

They say that the misunderstandings that may arise between the governments will be decided by tribunals or by a court of arbitration. But the governments do not at all wish for the settling of these misunderstandings: on the contrary, the governments invent misunderstandings, if they do not exist, because only misunderstandings with other governments give them an opportunity of maintaining the army on which their power is based. Thus the

enlightened friends of peace try to distract the attention of the suffering working people from the only means which frees them from the slavery, in which they are held from childhood by means of patriotism, and then by means of the venal priests of a corrupt Christianity, by binding men by an oath and, finally, threatening them with punishments.

In our time, when close peaceful relations have been established between the men of various nationalities and states, the deception of patriotism, which always demands the preference of one state or nationality to others, and which, therefore, always draws people into useless and ruinous wars, is too obvious for sensible people not to be freed from it; the deception of the obligatoriness of the religious oath, which is clearly forbidden in the Gospel professed by the governments, is, thank God, believed in less and less, so that it is only the fear of the punishment which is imposed on such refusals by the government, that for the majority of men serves as a barrier to refusing to take part in military service. But this fear, too, is only a consequence of the deception practised by the governments, and has no foundation but in hypnosis.

The governments may and must be afraid of those who refuse, and, in reality, are afraid of them, because every refusal undermines the prestige of the deception, in which the governments keep men, but those who refuse have no reason to fear the government which demands the crime. By refusing to do military service every man risks much less than in entering the army. The refusal to do military service, and the punishment, — imprisonment, exile, — are frequently only a profitable self-insurance from the dangers of military service. Upon entering military service a man risks taking part in war, for which he is being prepared, and of getting in the war into such a position that he will, under the most oppressive and agonizing of

conditions, be certainly killed, like one condemned to death, or crippled, as, indeed, I saw at Sevastopol, where a regiment came to a bastion where two regiments had already been killed off, and remained there until it, too, was annihilated. A second, more advantageous eventuality is this, that the one who does military service will not be killed, but will only fall sick and die from the unhealthy conditions of military service. A third eventuality is this, that, having been insulted, he will not hold out, will say something rude to his superior, will violate discipline, and will be subjected to a worse punishment than what he would suffer by refusing to do military service. The most advantageous eventuality is this, that, instead of imprisonment or deportation, to which he who refuses military service would be subjected, he will pass three or five years of his life in preparing himself to commit murder, in a corrupt circle and in a slavery similar to that in a prison, except for a degrading humility to corrupt men.

So much in the first place. In the second place, in refusing military service, every man, however improbable this may be, may none the less count on having to suffer no punishment, because his refusal will be that last arraignment of the government's deception, in consequence of which it will not be possible for any one to punish him, because no people will be found who are so stultified that they can coöperate in the punishment of the man who refuses to take part in their oppression. Thus the submission to the demands of military service is obviously only a submission to the hypnosis of the crowd, — a quite useless jumping of Panurge's sheep into the water to their obvious destruction.

But, besides the consideration of advantage, there is also another cause which ought to urge every man who is free from hypnosis and who understands the significance of his acts to refuse to do military service. A man

cannot help but wish that his life should not be a useless, aimless existence, but that it should be a service to God and men. Frequently a man lives his life, without finding an opportunity for this service. The call to take part in military service is that opportunity which presents itself to every man of our time. Every man, by refusing to take part personally in military service, either as a recruit or as a payer of taxes to the government, which uses these taxes for military matters, by this refusal in the most efficacious manner does a great service to God and men, because by this refusal he in the most efficacious manner contributes to the forward movement of humanity toward that better social structure, toward which humanity is striving and at which it must arrive.

But it is not only advantageous to refuse to take part in military service, and not only ought this to be done, — for the majority of the men of our time, if they are at all free from hypnosis, it is impossible not to renounce military service. For every man there are certain acts which are morally impossible, just as impossible as are certain physical acts. Such a morally impossible act for the vast majority of the men of our time, if one is at all free from hypnosis, is the promise of slavish obedience to strangers and immoral men, whose professed aim is to kill men. And so every man of our time not only will find it advantageous and necessary to refuse to take part in military service, but even impossible to refrain from doing so, if he is at all free from the stultification of hypnosis.

“But what will happen, when all men shall refuse to do military service, and there shall be no bridle and no fear on the evil ones, and the evil ones shall triumph, and there shall be no defence against the savages, — against the yellow race, — who will come and conquer us?”

I shall not speak of the fact that the evil men have triumphed long ago and still continue to triumph, and,

struggling among themselves, have for a long time been ruling over the Christians, so that there is no cause for fearing what has happened long ago ; nor shall I speak of this, that the fear of wild and of yellow men, whom we persistently irritate and teach war, is a barren excuse, and that for the imaginary defence against these wild and yellow men one-hundredth part of those armies which Europe now maintains would suffice ; I shall not speak of all that, because the considerations as to what may happen to the world at large from such or such an act of ours cannot serve as a guidance for our acts and our activity. Man has given to him a different guide, one that is incontestable, — the guide of his conscience, by following which he knows beyond a doubt that he is doing what he ought to do. And so all the considerations about the dangers which confront the separate individual who refuses to do military service, as also about this, what danger threatens the world in consequence of such refusals, — all those are particles of that vast and terrible deception in which Christian humanity is enmeshed, and which is carefully maintained by the governments, which live by this deception.

From a man's acting as his reason, his conscience, his God commands him to act, nothing but the best can result, both for him and for the world.

The men of our time complain of the evil current of life in our Christian world. This cannot be otherwise, when in our consciousness we have recognized not only the fundamental divine commandment, "Do not kill," which was proclaimed thousands of years ago, but also the law of the love and brotherhood of all men, and when, in spite of this, every man of our European world in reality renounces this fundamental divine law, which he recognizes, and at the command of a president, emperor, minister, a Nicholas, a William, puts on a fool's costume, takes up instruments of murder, and says, "I am

ready, — I will strike down, ruin, and kill whomsoever you command me to.”

What, then, can society be, which is composed of such men? It must be terrible, and, indeed, it is terrible.

Bethink yourselves, brothers! Do not listen to those rascals who from your childhood infect you with the devilish spirit of patriotism, which is contrary to goodness and truth, and which is needed only to deprive you of your property, and your freedom, and your human dignity; and do not listen to those cheats who preach war in the name of God, a cruel and revengeful God, invented by them, and in the name of the false Christianity, which they have corrupted, and still less to those new Sadducees who in the name of science and enlightenment, wishing for nothing but the continuation of the present order, gather at meetings, write books, and make speeches, promising to establish a good and peaceful life for men without their efforts. Do not believe them. Believe in nothing but your feeling, which tells you that you are not animals or slaves, but free men, who are responsible for your acts, and so are unable to be murderers, either by your own will, or by the will of managers who live by these murders. You need only stop and think, in order that you may see all the terror and madness of what you have been doing, and, having come to see it, may stop doing the evil which you yourselves hate and which ruins you. And if you stop doing the evil, which you yourselves hate, there will naturally, without your effort, like owls before daylight, disappear all those ruling cheats, who at first corrupt you and then torment you, and there will naturally be formed those new, human, fraternal conditions of life, for which Christian humanity, worn out from suffering, exhausted from deception, and stuck fast in insolvable contradictions, has been yearning.

Let each man without any finely spun and complicated considerations and assumptions fulfil what his conscience



indubitably tells him in our time, and he will know the justice of the Gospel words, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17).

*April 23, 1898.*



# TWO WARS

1898



# TWO WARS

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Two wars are at the present time being waged in the Christian world. One, it is true, has been ended, while the other is still going on ; but they were waged at one and the same time, and the contrast between the two is striking. The first, now ended, was an old, vainglorious, stupid, cruel, untimely, obsolete, pagan war, the Spanish-American War, which by the murder of one set of men decided how and by whom another set of men was to be ruled. The second war, which is still going on, and which will be ended only when all wars shall end, is a new, self-sacrificing, 'sacred war, which is based on nothing but love and reason, the war against war, which (as Victor Hugo expressed it at one of the congresses) the best, most advanced part of the Christian humanity declared long ago against the other, the coarse and savage part of the same humanity, and which a handful of Christian men, the Dukhobors of the Caucasus, have of late waged with particular force and success against the powerful Russian government.

The other day I received a letter from Colorado, from a Mr. Jesse Glodwin, who asks me to send him "a few words or thoughts, expressive of my sentiments, in regard to the noble work of the American nation and the heroism of her soldiers and sailors." This gentleman is, with the vast majority of the American nation, fully convinced that the action of the Americans, which is, that they beat

a few thousands of almost unarmed men (in comparison with the armament of the Americans the Spaniards were almost unarmed), is unquestionably a "noble work," and that those people who, having killed a large number of their neighbours, for the most part survived and were well and fixed themselves comfortably in life, were heroes.

The Spanish-American War, to say nothing of the horrible things which the Spaniards had done in Cuba, and which served as the pretext for the war, resembles this:

A decrepit and doting old man, who was brought up in the traditions of false honour, to settle a misunderstanding that arose between him and a young man, challenges this young man, who is in the full possession of his strength, to fisticuffs; and the young man, who, to judge from his past and from what he has said more than once, ought to stand incomparably higher than such a settlement of the question, accepts the challenge with knuckles in his clenched fist, jumps upon the decrepit and doting old man, knocks out his teeth, breaks his ribs, and then ecstatically tells his exploits to a vast public of just such young men as he is, and this public rejoices and praises the hero who has maimed the old man.

Such is the one war which occupied the minds of all in the Christian world. Nobody speaks of the other war; hardly any one knows anything about it. The other war is like this:

All the states deceive the people, saying: "All of you who are ruled by me are in danger of being conquered by other nations; I look after your well-being and security, and so demand that you shall annually give me millions of roubles, the fruits of your labours, which I am going to use for rifles, cannon, powder, ships for your defence; I demand, besides, that you shall enter the organizations instituted by me, where they will make of you senseless particles of an immense machine, — the army, — which I

manage. While connected with this army you will cease being men and having your own will, but will do everything I want you to do. What I want to do first of all is to rule, and the means I use for ruling is murder; and so I am going to teach you to commit murder."

In spite of the obvious insipidity of the assertion that men are in danger from the attack of the governments of other states, which assert that they, in spite of their desire for peace, are in the same danger; in spite of the degradation of that slavery to which men are subjected when they enter the army; in spite of the cruelty of the business to which they are called, men submit to the deception, give up their money for their own enslavement, and themselves enslave one another.

And here there appear people who say:

"What you say of the threatening danger and of your concern about protecting us against it is a deception. All the states affirm that they want peace, and at the same time arm themselves against one another. Besides, according to the law which you profess, all men are brothers, and it makes no difference whether we belong to this state or to another, and so the attack of other states upon us, with which you frighten us, has no terror and no meaning for us. But the main thing is this, that, according to the law which was given to us by God, and which you, too, profess, who demand of us a participation in murder, we are clearly forbidden to commit murder or even any acts of violence, and so we cannot and will not take part in your preparations for murder, will not give you any money for the purpose, and will not join the gangs established by you, where you corrupt the reason and the conscience of men, by changing them into instruments of violence, who are submissive to every evil man taking this instrument into his hands."

In this consists the second war, which has for a long time been waged with the representatives of rude force,

and which of late has burned up with particular virulence between the Dukhobors and the Russian government. The Russian government has brought out against the Dukhobors all those instruments with which it can fight. These instruments are: the police measures of arrests, the prohibition of leaving the place of abode, the prohibition of intercommunication, the seizure of letters, espionage, the prohibition of printing in the newspapers any information on matters pertaining to the Dukhobors, calumny of them, printed in the periodicals, bribery, flogging, prisons, deportation, the ruin of families. But the Dukhobors, on their side, have put forth nothing but their own religious instrument, meek reasonableness and long-suffering firmness, and say: "We must not obey men more than God, and no matter what they may do, we cannot and will not obey them."

They praise the Spanish and American heroes of that savage war, who, wishing to distinguish themselves in the eyes of men and to receive rewards and glory, have killed a very large number of men, or themselves have died in the process of slaying their neighbours. But no one speaks or knows of these heroes of the war against war, who are not seen and heard by any one, who have died under rods or in stinking cells, or in oppressive exile, and still to their very last breath remain true to the good and to truth.

I know of dozens of these martyrs who have died, and hundreds who, scattered over the whole world, continue this martyrs' profession of the truth.

I know Drózhzhin, a peasant teacher, who was tortured to death in the disciplinary battalion; I know another, Izyumchénko, Drózhzhin's companion, who was kept awhile in the disciplinary battalion and then was sent away to the end of the world; I know Olkhóvik, a peasant, who refused to do military service, was for this sentenced to be sent to the disciplinary battalion, and on the



boat converted his guard, Seredá. Seredá, who understood what Olkhóvik said about the sin of military service, came to the authorities and said, as the ancient martyrs said: "I do not want to be with the tormentors, join me to the martyrs," and they began to torture him, sent him to the disciplinary battalion, and then to Yakútsk Territory. I know dozens of Dukhobors, many of whom have died or grown blind, who none the less do not submit to the demands which are contrary to the law of God.

The other day I read a letter about a young Dukhobor who was sent by himself, without any companions, to a regiment stationed in Samarkand. Again the same demands on the part of the authorities, and the same simple, unswerving answers: "I cannot do what is contrary to my faith in God." — "We will torture you to death." — "That is your business. You do your business, and I will do mine."

And this twenty-year-old boy, cast by himself into a foreign country, amidst hostile people, strong, rich, cultured people, who direct all their forces to conquering him, does not succumb and does his great work.

They say: "These are useless sacrifices. These men will perish, but the structure of life will remain the same." Even thus, I think, people spoke of the uselessness of Christ's sacrifice and of the sacrifice of all the martyrs for the sake of truth. The people of our time, especially the scholars, have become so gross that they do not understand, and in their grossness cannot even understand, the significance and the influence of spiritual force. A charge of ten thousand pounds of dynamite sent into a crowd of living men, — that they understand, and in that they see strength; but an idea, truth, which has been realized, has been introduced into life to the point of martyrdom, has become accessible to millions, — that is according to their conception not force, because it does not boom, and you do not see broken bones and puddles of

blood. Scholars (it is true, bad scholars) use all the power of their erudition to prove that humanity lives like a herd, which is guided only by economic conditions, and that reason is given to it only for amusement; but the governments know what it is that moves the world, and so unerringly, from a sense of self-preservation, look most zealously upon the manifestation of spiritual forces, on which depends their existence or their ruin. For this reason all the efforts of the Russian government have been directed upon making the Dukhobors harmless, upon isolating them and sending them abroad.

But, in spite of all their efforts, the struggle of the Dukhobors has opened the eyes of millions.

I know hundreds of old and young military men who, thanks to the persecutions of the meek, industrious Dukhobors, have had misgivings as to the legality of their own activity; I know people who for the first time reflected upon life and the significance of Christianity, when they saw the life of these people or heard of the persecutions to which they have been subjected.

And the government, which rules over millions of people, knows this and feels that it has been struck at its very heart.

Such is the second war, which is being waged in our time, and such are its consequences. Its consequences are of importance, and not for the Russian government alone. Every government which is based on the army and on violence is struck in the same way by this weapon. Christ said, "I have conquered the world." He has really conquered the world, if people will only believe in the power of this weapon which is given to them.

This weapon is, for each man to follow his own reason and conscience.

This is so simple, so indubitable and obligatory for every single man. "You want to make me a participant in murder. You demand of me money for the preparation

of the implements of murder, and you want me to become a participant in the organized gathering of murderers," says a rational man, who has not sold or dimmed his conscience. "But I confess the same law with you, in which not only murder, but even every hostility, has long ago been forbidden, and so I cannot obey you."

It is this means, which is so simple, that conquers the world.

*Yásnaya Polyána, August 15, 1898.*



PATRIOTISM AND GOVERN-  
MENT

1900



# PATRIOTISM AND GOVERNMENT

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## 1

I HAVE several times had occasion to express the idea that patriotism is in our time an unnatural, irrational, harmful sentiment, which causes the greater part of those calamities from which humanity suffers, and that, therefore, this sentiment ought not to be cultivated, as it now is, but, on the contrary, ought to be repressed and destroyed with all means that sensible people can command. But, strange to say, in spite of the evident and incontestable relation of the universal armaments and destructive wars, which ruin the nations, to this exclusive sentiment, all my arguments as to the obsolescence, untimeliness, and harm of patriotism have been met either with silence or with intentional misunderstanding, or, again, with the same strange retort: "What is said is that there is harm in the bad patriotism, jingoism, chauvinism, but the real, good patriotism is a very elevated, moral sentiment, which it is not only senseless, but even criminal to condemn." But as to what this real, good patriotism consists in, either nothing is said, or, instead of an explanation, they utter pompous, highfalutin phrases, or something which has nothing in common with patriotism is put in the place of this patriotism, which we all know and from which we suffer so cruelly.

They generally say that the true, good patriotism consists in wishing the real good for one's nation or state, the good which does not impair that of the other nations.

The other day, while speaking with an Englishman about the present war, I told him that the real cause was not any selfish aims, as is generally assumed, but patriotism, as was evident from the mood of all English society. The Englishman did not agree with me, and said that if that was true, it was due to the fact that the patriotism which was now animating the English was a false patriotism, but that the good patriotism, with which he was permeated, consisted in this, that the English, his fellow citizens, should not act badly.

"Do you wish that only the English should not act badly?" I asked.

"I wish this to all!" he answered, showing plainly by this answer that the properties of benefits—be they moral, scientific, or even applied, practical—are by their nature such that they extend over all men, and so the desire for such benefits for any one is not only no patriotism, but even excludes it.

Similarly the peculiarities of every nation, which some other defenders of patriotism intentionally substitute for this concept, are no patriotism. They say that the peculiarities of each nation constitute an indispensable condition for the progress of humanity, and so patriotism, which strives after the retention of these peculiarities, is a good and useful sentiment. But is it not obvious that if at some time the peculiarities of each nation, its customs, beliefs, language, formed an indispensable condition of the life of humanity, these same peculiarities serve in our time as the chief impediment to the realization of the ideal of the brotherly union of the nations, which is already cognized by men? And so the maintenance and preservation of the peculiarities of any nationality, Russian, German, French, Anglo-Saxon, provoking a similar



maintenance and preservation not only on the part of the Hungarian, Polish, Irish nationalities, but also on the part of the Basque, Provençal, Mordvinian, Chuvash, and a mass of other nationalities, does not make for the closer friendship and union of men, but for their greater and ever greater estrangement and division.

Thus it is not the imaginary, but the real patriotism, the one which we all know, under the influence of which the majority of the men of our time are, and from which humanity is suffering so cruelly, that is, not a desire for spiritual benefits for one's nation (it is impossible to wish for spiritual benefits for only one's own nation), and not the peculiarities of national individualities (that is a quality, and by no means a sentiment), but a very definite feeling of preferring one's own nation or state to all the other nations and states, and so it is a desire that this nation or state enjoy the greatest welfare and greatness, which can be obtained and always are obtained only at the expense of the welfare and greatness of other nations and states.

It would seem to be obvious that patriotism as a sentiment is bad and harmful; as a doctrine it is stupid, since it is clear that if every nation and state shall consider itself the best of nations and states, all of them will find themselves in a gross and harmful error.

## 2

One would think that the harmfulness and irrationality of patriotism ought to be obvious to men. But, strange to say, enlightened, learned men not only fail to see this, but also with the greatest persistency and fervour, though without any rational foundations, refute every indication of the harmfulness and irrationality of patriotism, and continue to laud its beneficence and exalted condition.

What does that mean?

Only one explanation of this remarkable phenomenon presents itself to me. The whole history of humanity, from the most remote times to the present, may be viewed as the motion of the consciousness of separate individuals and of homogeneous aggregates of them from lower to higher ideas.

The whole path traversed both by each individual person and the homogeneous groups of men may be considered as a consecutive series of steps, from the lowest, which is on a level with the animal life, to the highest which at a given historical moment may be reached by the consciousness of man.

Every man, like the separate homogeneous groups, — the nations, the states, — has always walked, as it were, over the steps of ideas. Some parts of humanity march on, others fall far behind, and others again, the majority, move in the middle. But all of them, no matter on what step they may be standing, having behind them the obsolete recollections of the past, and ahead of them the ideals of the future, are always in a process of struggling between the obsolete ideas of the past and the ideas of the future, which are just entering into life. What generally takes place is this, that when an idea, which in the past was useful and even indispensable, becomes superfluous, this idea, after a more or less prolonged struggle, gives way to a new idea, which heretofore was an ideal, but now becomes the idea of the present.

But it also happens that the obsolete idea, which in the consciousness of men has already given way to the higher idea, is such that the maintenance of this obsolete idea is advantageous for some people, who have the greatest influence in society. And then it happens that this obsolete idea, in spite of its sharp contradiction to the whole structure of life, which is changed in the other relations, continues to influence men and to guide them in their acts. Such a retardation of an obsolete idea has always taken

place in the sphere of religion. The reason of it is this, that the priests, whose advantageous position is connected with the obsolete religious idea, making use of their power, intentionally retain the obsolete idea in the minds of men.

The same takes place, and for the same reason, in the political sphere, in relation to the idea of patriotism, on which every state structure is based. Men who profit by it artificially maintain this idea, which no longer has any sense or use. They are able to do so, since they are in possession of the most powerful means for influencing men.

In this do I find an explanation of the strange contradiction between the obsolete idea of patriotism and the whole contrary train of ideas, which in our time have already passed into the consciousness of the Christian world.

### 3

Patriotism, as a sentiment of exclusive love for one's nation and as a doctrine about the virtuous sacrifice of one's peace, property, and even life for the defence of the weak against the murderousness and violence of their enemies, was the highest idea of a time when every nation considered it possible and just, for the sake of its own good and greatness, to subject the men of another nation to murder and pillage; but as far back as two thousand years ago, the highest representatives of the wisdom of humanity began to recognize the higher idea of the brotherhood of men, and this idea, entering the consciousness more and more, has in our time received the most varied realization. Thanks to the greater ease of inter-communication, the unification of industry, commerce, the arts and the sciences, the men of our time are so united among themselves that the danger of conquests, slaughter, and

violence on the part of neighbouring nations has entirely disappeared, and all the nations (the nations, not the governments) live among themselves in peaceful, mutually advantageous, amicable, industrial, commercial, mental relations, which they have no reason and no need to violate. And so it would seem that the obsolete feeling of patriotism ought to be destroyed more and more and to vanish completely, as superfluous and incompatible with the vitalized consciousness of the brotherhood of the men of the various nationalities. However, the reverse takes place: this harmful and obsolete sentiment not only continues to exist, but is even fanned more and more.

The nations without any rational foundation, contrary to their consciousness and their advantages, not only sympathize with the governments in their attacks upon other nations, in their seizures of the possessions of others, and in the use of violence in defending what has already been seized, — but themselves demand these attacks, seizures, and defences, and rejoice in them and are proud of them. The minor oppressed nationalities, which have fallen into the power of the larger states, — the Poles, the Irish, the Bohemians, the Finns, the Armenians, — reacting against the patriotism of the conquerors, which is crushing them, have to such an extent become infected by the oppressing nations with the obsolete, useless, senseless, and harmful sentiment of patriotism, that their whole activity is centred upon it, and they themselves, suffering from the patriotism of the powerful nations, are prepared out of the same patriotism to do to the other nations the same that the nations which have conquered them have been doing to them.

This is due to the fact that the ruling classes (meaning by this not merely the governments with their officials, but also all the classes which enjoy an exclusive, advantageous position, — the capitalists, journalists, the

majority of artists and scholars) are able to retain their exclusive and advantageous position, as compared with the popular masses, only thanks to the political structure which is supported by means of patriotism. By having in their hands all the most powerful means for influencing the masses, they always unswervingly maintain the patriotic feelings in themselves and in others, the more so, since these sentiments, which support the power of the state, are more than any other rewarded by that power.

Every official succeeds in his service in proportion to his patriotism; even so a military man can advance in his career only in a war, which is provoked by patriotism.

Patriotism and its consequences, the wars, give a good income to the newspaper men and advantages to the majority of merchants. Every author, teacher, professor, will make his position the more secure, the more he preaches patriotism. Every emperor and king gains glory in proportion to his devotion to patriotism.

The army, the money, the school, the religion, the press, is in the hands of the ruling classes. In the schools they fan patriotism in the children by means of history, by describing their nation as the best of all the nations and always in the right; in the adults the same sentiment is roused by means of spectacles, celebrations, monuments, and a patriotic, lying press; but patriotism is chiefly roused in them by this, that, committing all kinds of unjust acts and cruelties against other nations, they provoke in these nations a hatred for their own nation, and then use this hatred for provoking such a hatred in their own nation.

The fanning of this terrible sentiment of patriotism has proceeded in the European nations in a rapidly increasing progression, and in our time has reached a stage beyond which it cannot go.

## 4

Within the memory of all, not merely old men of our time, there took place an event which in the most obvious manner showed the striking stupefaction to which the men of the Christian world were brought by means of patriotism.

The German ruling classes fanned the patriotism of their popular masses to such an extent that in the second half of the century a law was proposed to the people, according to which all men without exception were to become soldiers; all sons, husbands, fathers, were to study murder and to become submissive slaves of the first highest rank, and to be prepared for the murder of those whom they would be ordered to kill,—the men of the oppressed nationalities and their own labourers who should defend their rights,—their fathers and brothers, as the most impudent of all rulers, William II., publicly announced.

This terrible measure, which in the rudest way offends all the best sentiments of men, has, under the influence of patriotism, been accepted without a murmur by the nation of Germany.

The consequence of this was the victory over the French. This victory still more fanned the patriotism of Germany, and later of France, Russia, and other powers, and all the people of the Continental powers without a murmur submitted to the introduction of a universal military service, that is, to slavery, which for the degree of degradation and loss of will cannot be compared with any of the ancient conditions of slavery. After that, the slavish submission of the masses in the name of patriotism, and the impudence, cruelty, and madness of the governments knew no bounds. There began a mad race, provoked partly by lust, partly by vanity, and partly by greed, for the seizure of foreign lands in Asia, Africa, and

America, and a greater and ever greater mistrust and fury of the governments against one another.

The destruction of nations on seized lands was taken as something self-evident. The only question was as to who was going to be the first to seize the land and to destroy its inhabitants. All the rulers have not only in the most obvious manner violated the most primitive demands of justice against the vanquished nations and against one another, but have also practised all kinds of deceptions, rascalities, bribes, forgeries, espionage, pillage, and murder, and the nations have not only failed to sympathize with all that, but have even rejoiced, because their states, and not foreign states, have been committing these evil deeds. The mutual enmity of the nations and states has of late reached such wonderful dimensions that, although there is no reason why one state should attack other states, all know that all the states are all the time standing opposite one another extending their claws and showing their teeth, and just waiting for some one to fall into misfortune and grow feeble, in order to be able with the least danger to attack him and tear him to pieces.

All the nations of the so-called Christian world have been brought by patriotism to such a degree of bestialization that not only the men who are put to the necessity of killing or being killed, wish for and rejoice at murder, but also the men who calmly live in their houses in Europe, who are not threatened by any one, thanks to the rapid and easy means of communication and to the press, —all men in Europe and in America,—during any war are in the position of spectators in a Roman circus, and just like them rejoice at the slaughter, and just as bloodthirstily cry, "*Pollice verso!*"

Not only the adults, but also the children, the pure, wise children, according to the nationality to which they belong, rejoice, when they hear that not seven hundred, but one thousand Englishmen or Boers were killed and

torn to pieces by lyddite shells. And the parents, I know such, encourage their children in such bestiality.

But more than that. Every increase of the army of one state (and every state, being on account of patriotism in danger, wishes to increase it) compels the neighbouring state to increase its army also for the sake of patriotism, which again calls forth a new increase of the first.

The same is true of the fortresses and fleets: one state builds ten ironclads, so the neighbouring ones build eleven; then the first builds twelve, and so on in an endless progression.

“I’ll pinch you.” — “And I’ll strike you with my fist.” — “I’ll whip you.” — “And I’ll club you.” — “I’ll shoot you.” Thus quarrel and fight only bad children, drunken men, or animals, and yet it is this that is taking place in the midst of the highest representatives of the most enlightened states, the same that are guiding the education and morality of their subjects.

## 5

The state of affairs is getting worse and worse, and there is no possibility whatever of arresting this degeneration, which is leading to certain ruin. The only way out from this situation, as credulous people thought, is now closed by the events of recent times: I am speaking of The Hague conference, and the war between England and the Transvaal, which followed immediately after.

If people who think little or only superficially were able to console themselves with the idea that international tribunals can remove the calamities of war and the ever-growing armaments, The Hague conference, with the war which followed upon its heels, in the most obvious manner showed the impossibility of solving the question in this manner. After The Hague conference it became obvious that so long as there shall exist governments with armies,



the cessation of armaments and wars is impossible. For an agreement to be possible, it is necessary for the persons agreeing to believe one another. But for the powers to believe one another, they must lay down their arms, as do bearers of truce, when they come together for a consultation.

But so long as the governments do not believe one another, not only do not destroy or diminish, but, on the contrary, keep increasing their armies, in conformity with the increase among their neighbours, and unswervingly through spies watch every movement of the armies, knowing that every power will attack the neighbouring one as soon as it shall have a chance to do so, no agreement is possible, and every conference is either a piece of stupidity, or a plaything, or a deception, or a piece of impudence, or all these things taken together.

It behooved the Russian government, more than any other, to become the *enfant terrible* of this conference. The Russian government is so spoiled by the fact that at home no one retorts to all those obviously lying manifestoes and rescripts, that, having without the least scruples ruined its own nation by means of armaments, having choked Poland, robbed Turkestan and China, and strangled Finland with particular fury, it proposed to the governments to disarm themselves, with the full conviction that it would be believed.

But, no matter how strange, how unexpected, and how indecent this proposition was, especially at a time when orders had been given to increase the armies, the words, enunciated in the hearing of all, were such that the governments of the other powers could not before their nations decline to participate in the comical, patently deceptive consultations, and the delegates came together, knowing in advance that nothing could come of it, and in the course of several months, during which they received good salaries, though they laughed in their sleeves, all of

them good-naturedly pretended that they were busy establishing peace among the nations.

The Hague conference, which ended in terrible bloodshed, — the Transvaal war, — which no one has tried to stop, was none the less useful, though in a different way from what was expected from it: it was useful in that it showed in the most obvious manner that the evil from which the nations suffer cannot be mended by the governments, and that the governments, even if they wished to do so, are unable to abolish either armaments or wars. In order to be able to exist, the governments must defend their nations against attacks from other nations, but no nation wants to attack another, or ever does attack another, and so the governments not only do not wish for peace, but even make efforts to rouse the hatred of the other nations toward their own. Having roused the hatred of the other nations toward their own, and patriotism in their own nations, the governments assure their people that they are in danger and must defend themselves.

Having the power in their hands, the governments are able to irritate the other nations and to evoke patriotism in their own, and they use every effort to do both, nor can they themselves help doing so, because upon this is their existence based.

If the governments were needed before to defend their people against attacks from other nations, now, on the contrary, the governments artificially violate the peace which exists among the nations, and provoke hostilities among them.

When it was necessary to plough, in order to be able to sow, ploughing was a sensible thing; but it is evident that it is senseless and harmful to plough, after the crops have grown up. And yet it is precisely this that the governments make their nations do, — destroy that union which exists and would not be impaired by anything, if there were no governments.

## 6

Indeed, what are in our time those governments, without which it seems impossible for men to be able to exist?

If there was a time when the governments were a necessary and lesser evil than the one which resulted from defencelessness in relation to organized neighbours, the governments have now become an unnecessary and much greater evil than all that with which they frighten their nations.

The governments, not only the military ones, but the governments in general, could be, I do not say useful, but harmless, only in case they consisted of infallible, holy people, as is assumed to be the case in China. But the governments, by dint of their very activity, which consists in the practice of violence, are always composed of elements which are the very opposite of holy, — of the most impudent, coarse, and corrupted men.

For this reason every government, and especially every government to which the military power is delegated, is a most dangerous institution in the world.

The government, in its broadest sense, with the inclusion of capitalists and the press, is nothing but an organization such that the great majority of men are in the power of the minority, which stands above them; but this minority submits itself to the power of a still more restricted minority, and this again to a still more restricted minority, and so forth, reaching at last one man or a few men, who by means of military violence gain the power over all the rest. Thus this whole structure is like a cone, all the parts of which are in the full power of the few persons, or the person, at the apex of the cone.

But the apex of this cone is seized by those men, or by that man, who is more cunning, more bold, and more unscrupulous than the rest, or an accidental heir of those who were bolder and more unscrupulous.

To-day it is Borís Godunóv, to-morrow — Grigóri Otrépev; to-day — the harlot Catherine, who with her paramours strangled her husband, to-morrow — Pugachév, the day after — mad Paul, Nicholas, Alexander III.

To-day — Napoleon, to-morrow — Bourbon or Orleans, Boulanger, or a company of Panamaists; to-day — Gladstone, to-morrow — Salisbury, Chamberlain, Rhodes.

And it is such governments that are invested with full power, not only over property and life, but also over the spiritual and moral development, over the education, the religious guidance of all men.

Men produce this terrible machine of power, letting any one who pleases seize this power (and all the chances are that it will be seized by the one who is morally worst), and slavishly submit to it, and marvel that they are faring badly. They are afraid of mines, of anarchists, and are not afraid of that terrible structure, which threatens them any minute with the greatest calamities.

Men found that, to defend themselves against enemies, it is useful for them to tie themselves together, as the Circassians do, when defending themselves. But there is no danger, and men still continue to tie themselves.

They carefully tie themselves in such a way that one man is enabled to do with them what he pleases; then they allow the end of the rope which binds them to dangle about, leaving it to the first rascal or fool to take it up and do with them what he wants.

Is it not precisely what the nations are doing, when they submit, and establish and support a government which is organized with military power?

## 7

To free people from those terrible calamities of armaments and wars, which they suffer now, and which keep growing greater and greater, we do not need congresses,

nor conferences, nor treaties and tribunals, but the abolition of that implement of violence which is called the governments, and from which originate all the greatest calamities of men.

To abolish the governments only one thing is needed: it is necessary that men should understand that the sentiment of patriotism, which alone maintains this implement of violence, is a coarse, harmful, disgraceful, and bad, and above all, immoral sentiment. It is coarse, because it is characteristic of only such men as stand on the lowest stage of morality and who expect from other nations the same acts of violence that they want to practise themselves; it is harmful, because it violates the advantageous and joyous peaceful relations with other nations, and, above all, produces that organization of the governments, in which the worst man can acquire and always acquires the power; it is disgraceful, because it transforms the man not only into a slave, but also into a fighting cock, bull, gladiator, who ruins his forces and his life, not for his own purposes, but for those of his government; it is immoral, because, instead of recognizing himself as the son of God, as Christianity teaches us, or at least as a free man, who is guided by his reason,—every man, under the influence of patriotism, recognizes himself as the son of his country, the slave of his government, and commits acts which are contrary to his reason and to his conscience.

Men need but understand this, and the terrible concatenation of men, called the government, will fall of its own accord, without any struggle, and with it will fall that terrible, useless evil which is caused by it to the nations.

Men are beginning to see this. This is, for example, what a citizen of the United States writes:

“The one thing which we all, farmers, mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, teachers, ask is the right to attend to our own business. We have our homes, love our friends, are devoted to our families, and do not interfere in the

affairs of our neighbours, — we have our work, and we want to work.

“Leave us alone!

“But the politicians will not leave us alone. They impose taxes upon us, eat up our sustenance, keep a census of us, call our youths to their wars.

“Whole myriads of those who live at the expense of the government are maintained by them, in order to impose taxes upon us; but to tax us successfully, permanent armies are maintained. The argument that the army is needed for the defence of the country is an obvious deception. The French government frightens the people by saying that the Germans are about to attack them; the Russians are afraid of the English; the English are afraid of everybody else; and now we are told in America that it is necessary to increase the fleet and to add to the army, because Europe may at any moment unite against us. That is a deception and a lie. The common people in France, in Germany, in England, and in America are against war. All we wish is to be left alone. The men who have wives, parents, children, homes, have no desire to go away to fight with anybody. We are peaceable and fear war, — we hate it.

“All we want is not to do to others what we do not want others to do to us.

“War is a direct consequence of the existence of armed men. A country which maintains a large permanent army will fight sooner or later. A man who is proud of his strength in a wrestling match will some day meet a man who considers himself a champion wrestler, and they will fight. Germany and France are only waiting for a chance to try their strength. They have fought several times and will fight again. Not that the masses wish for war, but that the upper classes fan in them their mutual hatred and compel people to think that they must fight in order to defend themselves.

“Men who would like to follow Christ's teaching are taxed, insulted, deceived, and drawn into the army.

“Christ taught meekness, humility, forgiveness of sins, and that it is bad to kill. Scripture teaches people not to swear, but the ‘upper classes’ compel us to swear on the Scripture, in which they do not believe.

“How can we be freed from these spendthrifts, who do not work, but who are dressed in fine cloth with brass buttons and costly ornaments, who are supported by our labours, for whom we till the soil?

“Shall we fight with them?

“But we do not recognize bloodshed, and, besides, they have the arms and the money, and they can stand it longer than we.

“But who composes the army that will fight us?

“This army is formed by us, our deceived neighbours and brothers, who have been made to believe that they are serving God, when they defend their country from the enemy. In reality our country has no enemies except the upper classes, who have taken upon themselves to guard our interests, if only we shall consent to pay the imposts. They consume our sustenance and rouse our true brothers against us, in order to enslave and degrade us.

“You cannot send a telegram to your wife, or your friend, or your commission dealer, unless you first pay a revenue, which is being collected for the maintenance of armed men, who may be used for the purpose of killing you, and who will unquestionably put you in jail, if you do not pay it.

“The only means consists in impressing people with the idea that it is bad to kill, in teaching them that the whole law and the prophets demand that we should not do to others what we do not wish that others should do to us. Silently disregard these upper classes, and refuse to bow before their martial idol. Stop supporting preach-

ers who preach war and put forward patriotism as something important.

“Let them go and work, as we do.

“We believe in Christ, but they do not. Christ said what he thought; they say what they think will please the men in power,—‘the upper class.’

“We will not enter military service. We will not shoot at their command. We will not arm ourselves with bayonets against the good and meek masses. We will not at the suggestion of Cecil Rhodes shoot at shepherds and agriculturists, who are defending their hearths.

“Your deceptive cry, ‘Wolf, wolf!’ does not frighten us. We pay our imposts only because we are compelled to do so. We will pay them only so long as we are compelled to do so. We will not pay any church tribute to the hypocrites, nor our tithes for your hypocritical philanthropy, and we will on every occasion express our opinion.

“We will educate the men.

“And all the time our silent influence will grow; even the soldiers who have been drafted into the army will waver before fighting. We will preach the idea that the Christian life in peace and good-will is better than a life of struggle, bloodshed, and war.

“Peace on earth will come only when men shall separate themselves from the armies and will wish to do to others what they wish that others should do to them.”

Thus writes a citizen of the United States of North America, and on all sides and in all forms similar voices are heard.

Here is what a German soldier writes:

“I have taken part in two expeditions of the Prussian Guard (1866, 1870), and I hate war from the depth of my heart, since it has made me inexpressibly unhappy. We, the wounded warriors, receive for the most part such miserable rewards, that we really have to be ashamed of



having ever been patriots. I, for example, receive daily eighty pfennigs for my disabled arm, which was shot through at the storming of Saint Privas, on August 18, 1870. Many a hunting dog needs more for its maintenance. I have suffered for years from my disabled right arm. As early as 1866 I took part in the war against the Austrians, fighting at Trautenau and Königgrätz, and I have seen a lot of horrors. In 1870 I, being in the reserve, was again called out, and, as I have already said, I was wounded at the storming of Saint Privas: my right arm was twice shot down its whole length. I lost a good place (I was then a beer brewer), and after that I could not get it back. Since then I have never been able to get on my legs again. The intoxication has passed away, and the invalid warrior has nothing to live on but a beggar's pittance and alms. . . .

"In a world in which men run about like trained animals and are not capable of any other idea than that of outwitting one another for the sake of mammon, I may be considered an odd person, but I none the less feel in myself the divine idea of peace, which is so beautifully expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. According to my innermost conviction war is nothing but commerce on a large scale,—a commerce of the ambitious and mighty in the happiness of the nations.

"What horrors one passes through in connection with it! I shall never forget them, those pitiful groans, which penetrate me to the marrow of my bones.

"Men who have never done any evil to one another slay one another like wild animals, and petty souls of slaves draw the good God into it as an accomplice in these acts.

"My neighbour in the ranks had his jaws shattered by a bullet. The unfortunate man was insane from pain. He ran about like a madman, and in the burning summer heat was unable to find some water with which to cool

his terrible wound. Our commander, Crown Prince Frederick (later the noble Emperor Frederick) at that time wrote in his diary, 'War is an irony on the Gospel.' . . ."

Men are beginning to understand the deception of patriotism, in which all the governments are trying so zealously to maintain them.

## 8

"But what will happen when there shall be no more governments?" people generally ask.

There will be nothing; what will happen will be this, that which long ago ceased to be useful and now is superfluous and bad will be destroyed; what will be destroyed is the organ which, having become useless, has grown to be harmful.

"But if there shall be no governments, people will violate and kill one another," people generally say.

Why? Why will the abolition of an organization, which arose as the result of violence and which has been transmitted from generation to generation for the purpose of exerting violence, — why will the abolition of such an obsolete organization cause people to violate and kill one another? It would seem, on the contrary, that the destruction of the organ of violence would have the effect that people would stop practising violence and killing one another.

There now are people who are specially educated and prepared for killing and violating men, — people to whom the right to commit acts of violence is delegated, and who make use of an organization which is established for the purpose; and such violence and murder is considered to be a good and virtuous act. Then people will not be educated for the purpose, no one will have the right to do violence to others, there will be no organization of violence, and, as is not the case with the men of our time,

violence and murder will always and by all men be considered to be a bad thing.

If after the destruction of the governments acts of violence shall be committed, it is evident that they will be less than those at the present time, when there exist organizations specially established for the production of violence, and when there are conditions when violence and murder are considered good and useful.

The abolition of the governments will only destroy the traditional, useless organization of violence and its justification.

"There will be no laws, no property, no courts, no police, no popular education," people generally say, intentionally confusing the violence of the power with the different activities of society.

The abolition of the organization of governments, which are established for the purpose of exerting violence against people, does not bring with it the destruction of what is rational and good, and so what is non-violating in the laws, the courts, the property, the police defence, the financial institutions, the popular education. On the contrary, the absence of the rude power of the governments, whose only purpose is to support themselves, will contribute to a more rational and just public organization, which is in no need of violence. Courts, public affairs, and popular education, all that will exist to the extent to which the nations shall need them, and in a form which will not contain any evil that is connected with the present governmental organization; only that will be destroyed which was bad and interfered with the free manifestation of the will of the nations.

But even if we admit that with the absence of the governments there will occur disturbances and inner conflicts, the state of affairs would even in that case be better than what it is now. The present condition of the nations is such that it is hard to imagine it worse. The masses are

all ruined, and the ruin must inevitably keep growing greater. All the men are turned into military slaves and must at any moment await the command to go out and kill and be killed. For what else shall they wait? That the ruined nations shall starve to death? That, indeed, is now taking place in Russia, Italy, and India. Or that not only the men, but also the women shall be drafted into the army? In the Transvaal they are beginning to do so.

Thus, even if the absence of government should actually mean anarchy in the negative, disorderly sense of the word (which it does not at all mean), no disorders of anarchy could be worse than the condition to which the governments have already brought their nations and toward which they are leading them.

And so the liberation from patriotism and the destruction of the despotism of the governments which is based upon it cannot help but be useful to people.

## 9

Bethink yourselves, people, and, for the sake of your bodily and spiritual good, and for the same good of your brothers and sisters, stop, think, reflect on what you are doing!

Bethink yourselves and understand that not the Boers, English, French, Germans, Bohemians, Finns, Russians are your enemies, but that the only enemies are you yourselves, who with your patriotism support the governments, which oppress you and cause your misfortunes.

They undertook to defend you against dangers, and have carried this condition of defence to such an extent that you have all become soldiers and slaves, that you are all ruined, that you are being ruined more and more, and may and must expect at any moment the breaking of the

strained string and the terrible slaughter of you and your children.

No matter how great the slaughter may be and how it may end, the condition will remain the same. Even so and with still greater tension will the governments arm and destroy and corrupt you and your children, and no one will help you to stop it all, if you are not going to help yourselves.

There is but one help, and that is to destroy that terrible concatenation of the cone of violence, with which those who succeed in getting to the apex of the cone dominate the whole nation, and dominate the more surely, the more cruel and inhuman they are, as we know from the case of Napoleon, Nicholas I., Bismarck, Chamberlain, Rhodes, and our dictators who rule the nation in the name of the Tsar.

There is but one means for destroying this concatenation, and that is, to awaken from the hypnosis of patriotism.

You must understand that all the evil from which you suffer you are causing yourselves, in that you submit to those suggestions by means of which you are deceived by the emperors, kings, members of parliaments, rulers, military men, capitalists, clergy, authors, artists, — by all those who need this deception of patriotism in order to be able to live by your labours.

Whoever you may be, — a Frenchman, Russian, Pole, Englishman, Irishman, German, Bohemian, — you must understand that all our real human interests, whatever they be, — agricultural, industrial, commercial, artistic, or scientific, — all these interests, like all the pleasures and joys, in no way oppose the interests of the other nations and states, and that you are, by means of a mutual interaction, exchange of services, the joy of a broad brotherly communion, of an exchange not only of wares, but also of sentiments, united with the men of the other nations.

You must understand that the questions as to who succeeds in seizing Wei-hai-wei, Port Arthur, or Cuba — whether it is your government or another — are by no means a matter of indifference to you, but that every seizure made by your government is detrimental to you, because it inevitably brings with it all kinds of influences, which your government will exert against you, in order to compel you to take part in robberies and acts of violence, which are necessary for the seizures and for the retention of what has been seized. You must understand that your life can in no way be improved by this, that Alsace will be German or French, and that Ireland and Poland are free or enslaved: no matter whose they may be, you can live wherever you please; even if you were an Alsatian, an Irishman, or a Pole, — you must understand that every fanning of patriotism will only make your position worse, because the enslavement of your nation has resulted only from the struggle of patriotisms, and that every manifestation of patriotism in one nation increases the reaction against it in another. You must understand that you can save yourselves from all your calamities only when you free yourselves from the obsolete idea of patriotism and from the obedience to the governments which is based upon it, and when you shall boldly enter into the sphere of that higher idea of the brotherly union of the nations, which has long ago entered into life and is calling you to itself from all sides.

Let men understand that they are not the sons of any countries or governments, but the sons of God, and that, therefore, they cannot be slaves, nor enemies of other men, and all those senseless, now quite useless, pernicious institutions, bequeathed by antiquity, which are called governments, and all those sufferings, acts of violence, degradations, crimes, which they bring with them, will disappear of their own accord.

*Pirógovo, May 10, 1900.*

“THOU SHALT NOT KILL”

1900





## “THOU SHALT NOT KILL”

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Thou shalt not kill (Ex. xx. 13).

The disciple is not above his master ; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master (Luke vi. 40).

For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Matt. xxvi. 52).

Therefore all the things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them (Matt. vii. 12).

WHEN kings, like Charles I., Louis XVI., or Maximilian of Mexico, are sentenced to death, or when they are killed in court revolutions, as were Peter III., Paul, and all kinds of sultans, shahs, and khans, there is generally a silence on the subject ; but when they are killed without a trial and without court revolutions, as was the case with Henry IV., Alexander II., the Empress of Austria, the Shah of Persia, and now Humbert, such murders rouse the greatest indignation and amazement among kings, emperors, and their retinues, as though these men did not take part in murders, did not make use of them, did not prescribe them. And yet, the very best of the kings slain, such as Alexander II. and Humbert, were the authors, participants, and accomplices — to say nothing of domestic executions — in the murder of tens of thousands of men, who died on fields of battle ; while bad kings and emperors have been the authors of hundreds of thousands, of millions, of murders.

Christ's teaching has taken the place of the law, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” but those men

who have always kept that law, and even now keep it, and apply it in terrific proportions in their punishments and in wars, and, in addition to "an eye for an eye," without any provocation command men to kill thousands, as they do when they declare war, have no right to be provoked at the application to them of this law in such a small and insignificant measure, that hardly one king or emperor is killed to one hundred thousand or, perhaps, one million of those killed by command and with the consent of kings and emperors. Kings and emperors not only need not be provoked at such murders as those of Alexander II. and Humbert, but should only marvel how rare such murders are after the constant and universal example of murder which they give to men.

The men of the masses are so hypnotized that they see and do not understand the significance of what is constantly done to them. They see the constant cares of the kings, emperors, presidents, about the disciplined army, they see those inspections, manœuvres, parades, which they practise and which they boast of before one another, and they run like mad to see their brothers, who are dressed up in stupid, variegated, sparkling uniforms, by the sound of drums and horns transformed into machines and, at the shout of one man, performing in a body the same motions, and they do not understand what it means; but the meaning of this instruction is very simple and clear: it is nothing but a preparation for murder.

It is the stultification of men, in order to make of them instruments of murder. It is only kings, emperors, and presidents who do this, manage this, and pride themselves on it. And it is these men, who are specially interested in murder, who have made a profession of murder, who always wear military uniforms and instruments of murder,—the sword at their side,—that are terrified and provoked, when one of them is killed.

The murders of kings, like the late murder of Humbert,

are not terrible on account of their cruelty. The acts committed by order of kings and emperors — not only in the past, as the Night of Bartholomew, the massacres for the sake of faith, the terrible pacifications of peasant risings, the Versailles slaughters, but also the present governmental executions, the starvations in solitary cells and disciplinary battalions, the hangings, the chopping off of heads, the shooting, and the slaughters in war — are incomparably more cruel than the murders committed by the anarchists. Nor are these murders terrible on account of not having been deserved. If Alexander II. and Humbert did not deserve to be killed, how much less deserved to be killed those thousands of Russians who perished at Plevna, and of Italians who perished in Abyssinia. Such murders are not terrible on account of their cruelty or the innocence of the murdered, but on account of the senselessness of those who commit them.

If the murderers of the kings do that under the influence of a personal sentiment of indignation, provoked by the sufferings of an enslaved nation, as the authors of which to them appear Alexander, Carnôt, Humbert, or under the influence of a personal feeling of revenge, such acts, however immoral, are comprehensible; but how is it that an organization of men — of the anarchists, as they now say — which sent Bressi out, and which is threatening another emperor, has not been able to invent anything better for the amelioration of men's condition than the murder of those men whose annihilation can be as useful as the cutting off of the head of that fabulous monster, when in place of the one cut off there immediately grew out a new one? Kings and emperors have long ago arranged things in the same manner as in a magazine rifle: the moment one bullet flies out, another takes its place, — *le roi est mort, vive le roi!* So what sense is there in killing them?

Only after a most superficial reflection can the murder

of these men appear as a means for saving the people from oppression and from wars, which cause the ruin of human lives.

We need only recall that such oppressions and such wars have always existed, independently of who was at the head of the governments, — whether it was Nicholas or Alexander, Frederick or William, Napoleon or Louis, Palmerston or Gladstone, McKinley or anybody else, — to understand that it is not any definite class of men who cause these oppressions and wars from which the nations suffer. The calamities of men are not due to separate individuals, but to such a structure of society that all men are united among themselves in such a way that all are in the power of a few men (or, more frequently, of one man), who are so corrupted by this, their unnatural position of deciding the fate and lives of millions of men, that they are all the time in a morbid state, all the time obsessed by a mania of greatness, which is imperceptible in them only in consequence of their exclusive position.

In the first place, these men are from their earliest childhood and up to their death surrounded by the most senseless luxury and are all the time surrounded by an atmosphere of lying and servility; their whole education, all their occupations, everything is centred in one thing, in the study of former murders, of the best methods of killing in our time, of the best preparations for murder. From earliest childhood they are taught every possible way of killing, and they always carry about them instruments of murder, swords and sabres, and are dressed up in all kinds of uniforms, order parades, inspections, manoeuvres, visit one another, presenting decorations and regiments to one another, and not only is there not a single man to name what they are doing by its real name, to tell them that the occupation with preparations for murder is detestable and criminal, but from all sides they hear nothing but approval, nothing but transports in

consequence of this their activity. At every appearance of theirs in public, at every parade and inspection, a crowd of people runs after them, greeting them ecstatically, and it seems to them that it is the whole nation that is expressing its approval of their activity. That part of the press which they see, and which to them appears as the expression of the sentiments of the whole nation or of its best representatives, in the most servile manner proclaims all their words and acts, no matter how stupid and bad they may be. The men and women about them, both clerical and lay, — all of them men who do not esteem human dignity, — in their attempt to outstrip one another in refined flattery, are subservient to them in everything and in everything deceive them, giving them no chance to see real life. These men may live a hundred years without seeing a real free man and without ever hearing the truth. One is often frightened, hearing the words and seeing the acts of these men; but we need only consider their situation, to understand that any man would act similarly in their place. A sensible man, upon finding himself in their place, can do but one sensible thing, and that is, get out of that situation: if he remains in it, he will do the same.

Indeed, what must be going on in the head of the German William, a narrow-minded, half-educated, vain-glorious man, with the ideal of a German Junker, when there is not a stupid and abominable utterance by him which is not met by an ecstatic “Hoch!” and is not commented upon by the whole press of Europe as something extremely significant. Let him say that the soldiers must by his will kill even their own fathers, and they shout “Hurrah!” Let him say that the Gospel ought to be introduced with the iron fist, — “Hurrah!” Let him say that in China the army must not make any captives, but must kill all men, and he is not put into a lunatic asylum, but they shout “Hurrah!” and sail for China to

execute his command. Or the naturally meek Nicholas II. begins his reign by announcing to respectable old men, in reply to their expressed desire to deliberate on their affairs, that self-government is a senseless dream, and the organs of the press, the men whom he sees, extol him for it. He proposes a childish, stupid, and deceptive project of a universal peace, and at the same time makes preparations for increasing his army, and there is no limit to the laudations of his wisdom and virtue. Without any necessity, senselessly, and pitilessly he torments a whole nation, the Finns, and again he hears nothing but approval. He finally causes the Chinese slaughter, which is terrible for its injustice, cruelty, and incompatibility with the project of peace, and all people, on all sides, laud him simultaneously for his victories and for the continuation of his father's peaceful policy.

Indeed, what must be going on in the heads and hearts of these men?

Thus it is not Alexander, Humbert, William, Nicholas, and Chamberlain, who guide the oppressions and wars of the nations, that are the authors of the oppressions of the masses and the murders in wars, but those who have put them in the positions of rulers over the lives of men, and support them in these positions. And so Alexander, Nicholas, William, Humbert, are not to be killed, but men are to stop supporting the order of society which produces them. What supports the present order of society is the egotism and stupidity of men who sell their freedom and honour for their insignificant material advantages.

The men who stand on the lower rungs of the ladder, partly in consequence of their stultification by their patriotic and pseudo-religious education, surrender their freedom and feeling of human dignity in favour of the men who stand above them and who offer them material advantages. In the same condition are the men who stand on a somewhat higher rung of the ladder, and

who, also in consequence of their stultification and personal advantage, surrender their freedom and human dignity ; the same is true of those who stand still higher, and thus it goes on to the highest rungs, — to those persons, or to that one person, who stands at the apex of the cone and who has nothing to acquire, whose only motive for action is love of power and vainglory, and who is generally so corrupted and stultified by the power over the life and death of men and the flattery which is connected with it and the servility of those who surround him, that, without ceasing to do evil, he is fully convinced that he is benefiting humanity.

The nations, by themselves sacrificing their human dignity for their own advantage, produce these men, who cannot do anything else but what they are doing, and then the nations are angry at them for their stupid and evil deeds. To kill these men is the same as spoiling children and then whipping them.

To have no oppressions of the nations and no unnecessary wars, and for no one to be provoked at those who seem to be the authors of them and to kill them, very little, it would seem, would suffice, namely, that men should merely understand things as they are, and should call them by their real names, should know that the army is an instrument of murder, and that the levy and maintenance of the army — precisely what the kings, emperors, and presidents are concerned about with so much self-assurance — is a preparation for murder.

If only every king, emperor, and president understood that his duty of managing the army is neither honourable nor important, as he is made to believe by his flatterers, but a bad and disgraceful work of preparing for murder ; and if every private person understood that the payment of taxes, with which soldiers are hired and armed, and much more enlistment in the army, are not indifferent acts, but bad, disgraceful acts, not only an abetment of,

but even a participation in murder, — then the provoking power of the emperors, presidents, and kings, for which they are now killed, would die of its own accord.

So we must not kill an Alexander, a Carnot, a Humbert, and others, but must explain to them that they themselves are murderers, and, above all, we must not permit them to kill people, we must refuse to kill by their command.

If men are not yet doing so, this is due only to the hypnosis in which the governments carefully maintain them from a feeling of self-preservation. And so it is not with murders that we can contribute to this, that men may stop killing kings and one another, — the murders, on the contrary, intensify the hypnosis, — but with an awakening from the hypnosis.

That is precisely what I am attempting to bring about with this note.

*August 8, 1900.*



WHERE IS THE WAY OUT?

1900



# WHERE IS THE WAY OUT?

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## ON THE CONDITION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES

### 1

A BOY is born in the country; he grows up and works with his father, his grandfather, his mother.

And the boy sees that from the field which he ploughed, harrowed, and seeded with his father, which his mother and the girl cut with the sickle and harvested, the sheaves which he himself pulled down from the rick, to help his mother,—the boy sees that his father does not take the first ricks to his own house, but, past the garden, to the threshing-floor of the landed proprietor. Driving with the squeaky wagon, which he and his father had themselves fastened with ropes, past the manor, the boy sees on the balcony a dressed-up lady sitting near a shining samovár at a table, which is covered with dishes, pastry, and sweets, and on the other side of the road, in a cleared space, the proprietor's two boys, in embroidered shirts and shining boots, playing ball.

One boy throws the ball over the wagon.

"Pick it up, boy!" he shouts.

"Pick it up, Váška!" Váška's father, walking beside the wagon, with the reins in his hand, and taking off his hat, cries out to his son.

"What is this?" thinks the boy. "I am worn out from work, and they play, and I am to pick up their ball."

But he picks up the ball, and the young lord, without looking at the boy, takes the ball with his white hand out of the sunburnt black hand of the boy, and goes back to his game.

The father has walked on with the wagon. The boy catches up with him on a run, shuffling his tattered low boots in the dust of the road, and they drive into the manorial threshing-floor, which is full of wagons with sheaves. The busy steward, in linen frock coat, which is wet from perspiration in the back, and with a rod in his hand, meets the boy's father, whom he scolds for not having driven to the right spot. His father makes excuses, walks as though fatigued, jerks the tired horse by the rein, and drives the wagon on the other side.

The boy goes up to his father and asks:

"Father, why do we take our rye to him? *We* harvested it?"

"Because the land is theirs," the father answers, angrily.

"Who gave them the land?"

"Ask the steward. He will show you who. Do you see their rod?"

"Where will they put all this corn?"

"They will thresh it, and then they will sell it."

"And what will they do with the money?"

"They will buy those cakes that you saw on the table as we drove by."

The boy grows silent and falls to musing. But he has no time for that. They are shouting to his father to move the wagon closer to the barn. The father moves the wagon, climbs upon it, and, having with difficulty loosened the ropes, straining his rupture more and more, throws the sheaves into the mow, while the boy holds the old mare, which he has for two years been driving to pasture, keeping the flies away from her, as his father

commands him to do. He thinks and thinks, and cannot understand why the land does not belong to those who work upon it, but to those sons of the lord, who in embroidered shirts play ball and drink tea and eat cakes.

The boy continues to think about it at work, and when he goes to bed, and when he pastures the horses, — and can find no answer for it. All say that it must be so, and all live in that manner.

And the boy grows up, and he is married off, and children are born to him, and his children ask the same question of him, and he answers them in the same way that his father answered him. And, living like him in want, he works submissively for other, idle people.

And thus he lives, and thus live all around him. Wherever he may go or travel, — so a pilgrim tells him, — it is the same. Everywhere peasants work above their strength for other, idle people, by overwork get ruptures, asthma, consumption, take to drinking from grief, and die before their time; the women exhaust their last strength in cooking, attending to the cattle, washing for the peasants, and making their clothes, and also age before their time, and waste away from overwork and untimely labour.

And everywhere those they work for provide themselves with buggies, carriages, trotters, horses, build arbours, arrange games, and from Easter to Easter, from morning until evening, dress themselves up as for a holiday, play and eat and drink every day as even on the greatest holiday is not the case with him who works for them.

## 2

Why is that so?

The first answer which presents itself to the labouring farmer is this, that it is so, because the land was taken from him and was given to those who do not work it. He and his family have to eat, but the working peasant

has either no land at all, or so little of it that it will not support his family. Thus he must starve or else take the land which is not far from the farms, but which does not belong to those who work; he has to take the land, agreeing to those conditions which are offered to him.

At first it seems to be so, but that is not all of it: there are peasants who have enough land, and who may be able to support themselves by it.

But it turns out that even such peasants, all of them or a part, again sell themselves into slavery. Why is that so? Because the peasants have to buy for money ploughshares, scythes, horseshoes, materials for buildings, kerosene, tea, sugar, liquor, ropes, salt, matches, cottons, tobacco; but the money which a peasant earns by the sale of his products is all the time taken away from him in the form of direct and indirect imposts, and the price of those articles which he needs is raised. Thus the majority of the peasants are unable to provide themselves with the necessary money except by selling themselves into slavery to those who have the money.

This the peasants and their wives and daughters do. Some sell themselves in their neighbourhood; others sell themselves a distance away, in the capitals,—hiring themselves out as lackeys, coachmen, nurses, wet-nurses, chambermaids, bath servants, waiters, and, above all, as factory hands, going to the cities by whole families.

Having sold themselves into these occupations in the cities, the country people become unaccustomed to farm labour and simplicity of life, and get used to city food, dress, beverages, and through these habits still more confirm their slavery.

Thus it is not merely the lack of land that causes the labouring man to be in the slavery of the rich; the cause of it is also to be found in the taxes, the raised price of commodities, and the luxurious city habits, which the

country workers get used to, when they go away from their villages.

The slavery began with the land, with the land being taken away from the workers, but this slavery has been strengthened and confirmed by this, that the country people have become unaccustomed to labour and have become used to city luxury, which cannot be satisfied in any other way than by selling themselves into slavery to those who have money ; and this slavery is growing and becoming more and more confirmed.

In the country people live on semi-starvation rations, in constant labour and want, enslaved to the landowners ; in the cities, in the factories and plants, the labourers live in slavery to the manufacturers, for generations physically and morally corrupted by the monotonous, tedious, unhealthy work, which is not proper for a man. And with the years the situation of either class of men is getting worse and worse. In the country the people are getting poorer and poorer, because an ever growing number of people are going to the factories. In the cities the people are not getting poorer, but seemingly richer, but at the same time more and more incontinent, and more and more unable to do any other work than the kind they are used to, and so they are more and more in the power of the manufacturers.

Thus the power of the landowners and the manufacturers, of the rich in general, is getting stronger and stronger, while the condition of the labourers is getting worse and worse. What, then, is the way out of this situation ? Is there one ?

### 3

It would seem that the liberation from the slavery of the land is very easy. For this liberation all that is needed is to recognize what is self-understood, and what people would never have doubted, if they were not de-

ceived, namely, that every man born has the right to gain his sustenance from the land, just as every man has a right to the air and the sun, and that, therefore, no one who does not work the land has the right to regard the land as his own and to keep others from working it.

But the government will never permit this liberation from the slavery of the land to take place, because the majority of the men who constitute the government own lands, and upon this ownership all their existence is based.

They know this, and so they try with all their forces to hold on to this right, and defend this right.

About thirty years ago Henry George proposed, not only a rational, but a very practicable project for the emancipation of the land from ownership. But neither in America nor in England (in France they do not even speak of it) was this project accepted, and they tried in every way to overthrow it; but, as it is impossible to overthrow it, they passed it in silence.

If this project has not been accepted in America and in England, there is still less hope that this project will be accepted in monarchical countries, such as Germany, Austria, or Russia.

In Russia vast expanses of territory have been seized by private individuals and by the Tsar and the imperial family, and so there is no hope that these men, feeling themselves as helpless without the right to the land as the birdlings feel without their nest, will give up their right and will refrain from fighting for this right with all their strength. And so, as long as the power shall be on the side of the government, which is composed of land-owners, there will be no emancipation from the ownership of the land.

Just as little, and even less, will there be a liberation from the taxes. The whole government, from the head of the state, the Tsar, down to the last policeman, lives



by the taxes. And so the abolition of the taxes by the government is as unthinkable as that a man should take from himself his only means of existence.

It is true, some governments seem to be trying to relieve their people from the burden of the taxes by transferring them to the income, by increasing the taxes in accordance with the income. But such a transference of the taxes from a direct levy to the income cannot deceive the masses, because the rich, that is, the merchants, landowners, and capitalists will, in proportion with the increase of the taxes, increase the price of commodities which are needed by the labourers and the price of the land, and will lower the wages of labour. Thus the whole burden of the taxes will again be borne by the labourers.

For the labourers to be freed from the slavery which is due to this, that the implements of production are owned by the capitalists, the learned have proposed a whole series of measures, in consequence of which, according to their assumption, the wages of the labourers are to increase all the time, while the hours of labour must diminish, and finally all the implements of labour have to pass from the possession of the masters into the hands of the labourers, so that the labourers, possessing all the factories and plants, will not be compelled to give up a part of their labours to the capitalists, but will have for their labours the necessary commodities. This method has been advocated in Europe, in England, France, and Germany, for more than thirty years, but so far there has not only been no realization of this method, but not even any approach to it.

There exist labour unions, strikes are inaugurated, by means of which the labourers demand fewer working hours and greater pay; but since the governments, who are united with the capitalists, do not allow, and never will allow, the implements of production to be taken

away from the capitalists, the essence of the matter remains the same.

Receiving better pay and doing less work, the labourers increase their needs and so remain in the same slavery to the capitalists.

Thus the slavery in which the working people are can obviously not be destroyed so long as the governments, in the first place, will secure the ownership of land to the non-working landowners; in the second, will collect direct and indirect taxes; in the third, will defend the property of the capitalists.

#### 4

The slavery of the working people is due to this, that there are governments. But if the slavery of the labourers is due to the government, the emancipation is naturally conditioned by the abolition of the existing governments and the establishment of new governments,—such as will make possible the liberation of the land from ownership, the abolition of taxes, and the transference of the capital and the factories into the power and control of the working people.

There are men who recognize this issue as possible, and who are preparing themselves for it. But fortunately (since such an action, which is always connected with violence and murder, is immoral and ruinous for the cause itself, as has frequently been repeated in history) such actions are impossible in our time.

The time has long ago passed, when the governments naïvely believed in their beneficent destiny for humanity and did not take any measures for securing themselves against rebellions (besides, there were no railways and no telegraphs then), and they were easily overthrown, as was the case in England in 1740, in France during the great Revolution and later, and in Germany in 1848. Since then there has been but one revolution, in 1871, and that

one happened under exceptional conditions. In our day revolutions and the overthrow of governments are simply impossible. They are impossible, because in our time the governments, knowing their uselessness and harmfulness, and that in our time no one believes in their sanctity, are guided by nothing but a feeling of self-preservation, and, making use of all the means at their command, are constantly on the lookout for everything which may not only impair their power, but even shake it.

Every government has in our time an army of officials, which is connected by means of railways, telegraphs, telephones; it has fortresses and prisons with all the most modern appliances, — photography, anthropometric measurements, mines, cannon, guns, all the most perfect instruments of violence that can be had, — and the moment something new appears, it is at once applied to purposes of self-preservation. There is the organization of espionage, a venal clergy, venal scholars and artists, and a venal press. Above all else, every government has a body of officers, who are corrupted by patriotism, bribery, and hypnotism, and millions of physically sound and morally undeveloped children of twenty-one years of age, — the soldiers, or a rabble of immoral hirelings, who are stultified by discipline and are ready for any crime which they are ordered by their superiors to commit.

And so it is impossible in our time by force to destroy the government, which is in possession of such means, and which is all the time on guard. No government will allow this to be done to itself. And so long as there shall be a government, it will maintain the ownership of the land, the collection of the taxes, and the possession of capital, because the larger landowners and the officials, who receive their salaries from the taxes, and the capitalists form parts of the government. Every attempt of the labourers to get possession of the land, which is in the hands of private owners, will always end the way it has

always ended, — in that the soldiers will come, will beat and drive away those who want to seize the land, and will give it back to the owner. In the same way will end every attempt at not paying the taxes demanded, — the soldiers will come, will take away as much as the taxes amount to, and will beat him who refuses to pay what is demanded of him. The same will happen to those who will try, not so much to seize the implements of production, the factory, but simply to institute a strike, to keep other workmen from lowering the wages for work. The soldiers will come and will disperse the participants, as has constantly happened in every place, in Europe and in Russia. So long as the soldiers are in the hands of the government, which lives on taxes and is connected with the owners of land and of capital, a revolution is impossible. And so long as the soldiers are in the hands of the government, the structure of life will be such as those who have the soldiers in their hands will want it to be.

## 5

And so there naturally arises the question: Who are these soldiers?

These soldiers are the same people whose land has been taken away, from whom the taxes are being collected, and who are in slavery to the capitalists.

Why do these soldiers act against themselves?

They do so because they cannot do otherwise. They cannot do otherwise, because by a long, complex past — of their education, of their religious instruction, of hypnotization — they have been brought to such a state that they cannot reflect, and are able only to obey. The government, having in its hands the money, which it has taken from the masses, with this money bribes all kinds of chiefs, who have to enlist soldiers, and then military chiefs, who have to teach, that is, deprive the men of

their human consciousness; but above all, the government with this money bribes the teachers and the clergy, who have to use every effort for impressing adults and children with the idea that militarism, that is, the preparation for murder, is not only useful for men, but also good and pleasing to God. And year after year, though they see that they and their like are enslaving the masses to the rich and the government, they submissively enter the army, and, having entered, without a murmur do everything prescribed to them, though that not only may be the obvious detriment of their brothers, but may even be the killing of their own parents.

The bribed officials, military teachers, and the clergy prepare the soldiers, by stupefying them.

The soldiers, at the command of their superiors and with threats to deprive of liberty, to inflict wounds and death, take the income from the land, the taxes, and the income from the factories, from commerce, for the benefit of the ruling classes. But the ruling classes use a part of this money for bribing the chiefs, the military teachers, and the clergy.

## 6

Thus the circle is closed, and there does not seem to be any way out.

The issue suggested by the revolutionists, which consists in using force in the struggle with force, is obviously impossible. The governments, who are already in possession of a disciplined force, will never permit the formation of another disciplined force. All the attempts of the past century have shown how vain such attempts are. Nor is there a way out, as the socialists believe, by means of forming a great economic force which would be able to fight successfully against the consolidated and ever more consolidating force of the capitalists. Never will the labour unions, who may be in possession of a few miser-

able millions, be able to fight against the economic power of the multi-millionaires, who are always supported by the military force. Just as little is there a way out, as is proposed by other socialists, by getting possession of the majority of the parliament. Such a majority in the parliament will not attain anything, so long as the army shall be in the hands of the governments. The moment the decrees of the parliament shall be opposed to the interests of the ruling classes, the government will close and disperse such a parliament, as has been so frequently done and as will be done so long as the army is in the hands of the government. The introduction of socialistic principles into the army will not accomplish anything. The hypnotism of the army is so artfully applied that the most free-thinking and rational person will, so long as he is in the army, always do what is demanded of him. Thus there is no way out by means of revolution or in socialism.

If there is a way out, it is the one which has not been used yet and which alone incontestably destroys the whole consolidated, artful, and long-established governmental machine for the enslavement of the masses. This way out consists in refusing to enter into the army, before one is subjected to the stupefying and corrupting influence of discipline.

This way out is the only one which is possible and which at the same time is inevitably obligatory for every individual person. It is the only possible one, because the existing violence is based on three actions of the government,—on the robbery of the masses, on the distribution of money thus taken to those who commit the robbery, and on the drafting of the masses into the army.

A private individual cannot keep the government from practising robbery on the masses by means of the drafted army, nor can it keep it from distributing the money collected from the masses to those who are needed by the

government for the drafting of the army and their stultification; but he can keep the masses from entering into the army, by not joining it himself and by explaining to others the essence of the deception to which they fall a prey when they enter into the army.

Not only *can* every man do so,—every private individual *must* do so. Every private individual must do so, because the entrance into military service is a renunciation of every religion, no matter which he may profess (every one of them prohibits murder), and a renunciation of human dignity,—a voluntary entrance into slavery having for its purpose nothing but murder.

In this is the only possible, necessary, and inevitable way out from that enslavement in which the ruling classes keep the working people.

The way out does not consist in destroying violence by means of violence, not in seizing the implements of production or in fighting the governments in the parliaments, but in every man's recognition of the truth for himself, in practising it, and in acting in accordance with it. But the truth that a man must not kill his neighbour has been so universally cognized by humanity that it is known to everybody.

Let only men apply their forces, not to external phenomena, but to the causes of the phenomena, to their own lives, and like wax before the fire will all that power of violence and evil melt, which now holds and torments people.

*October, 1900.*





NEED IT BE SO?

1900



# NEED IT BE SO?

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## 1

AMIDST fields there stands, surrounded by a wall, a foundry, with incessantly smoking chimneys, clattering chains, furnaces, a railway siding, and scattered little houses of the managers and labourers. In this foundry and in the mines belonging to it the working people swarm like ants; some of them, in passages two hundred feet underground, which are dark, narrow, close, damp, and constantly threaten with death, are at work from morning until night, or from night until morning, mining the ore; others in the darkness, bending over, take this ore or clay to the shaft and take back empty cars, and again fill them, and so work for twelve or fourteen hours a day throughout the week.

Thus they work in the mines. In the foundry itself, some work at the furnace in an oppressive heat, others work at the trough of the melted ore and slag; others again, the engineers, stokers, smiths, brickmakers, carpenters, are at work in the shops, also from twelve to fourteen hours a day throughout the week.

On Sunday all these men receive their wages, wash themselves, or sometimes even do not wash themselves, go to the inns and saloons which on all sides surround the foundry, and which entice the working people, and early on Monday morning they go back to their work.

Near this same foundry peasants plough somebody else's field with lean, worn-out horses. These peasants got up with the dawn, if they have not passed the night in the pasture, that is, near a swamp, the only place where they can feed their horses; they get up with the dawn, come home, harness the horses, and, taking with them a slice of bread, go out to plough somebody else's field.

Other peasants are sitting not far away from the foundry, on the highway, and, having made themselves a shield from matting, are breaking rock for the highway. The legs of these men are bruised, their hands are all calluses, their whole bodies are dirty, and not only their faces, hair, and beards, but even their lungs are permeated with lime dust.

Taking a small unbroken stone from a heap, these men put it between the soles of their feet, which are covered with bast shoes and wrapped in rags, and strike this stone with a heavy mallet, until the stone breaks: when the stone has broken, they take the smaller parts and strike them until these are broken fine; and again they take whole stones, and again. — And thus these men work from early summer dawn until night, — fifteen, sixteen hours, resting only for two hours after dinner, and twice, at breakfast and at noon, strengthening themselves with bread and water.

And thus do these men live in the mines and in the foundry, and the ploughmen, and the stone-breakers, from early youth until old age; and in similar work above their strength live their wives and their mothers, suffering from diseases of the womb; and thus live their fathers and their children, poorly fed, poorly dressed, doing work which is above their strength and ruins their health, from morning until evening, from childhood until old age.

And past the foundry, past the stone-breakers, past the

ploughing peasants, meeting and overtaking ragged men and women with their wallets, who are wandering from place to place and begging in the name of Christ, there races a carriage, with tinkling bells, drawn by four matched chestnut horses of good height, the worst of which is worth the whole farm of any of the peasants who are admiring the four-in-hand. In the carriage are seated two ladies, displaying brightly coloured parasols, ribbons, and hat feathers, each of which costs more than the horse with which a peasant ploughs his field; in the front seat sits an officer, shining in the sun with lace and buttons, and dressed in a freshly laundered blouse; on the box sits a ponderous coachman, in blue silk shirt-sleeves and velvet sleeveless coat. He came very near crushing some women pilgrims, and almost knocked a peasant, who, dressed in a dirty, ore-soiled shirt, was jolting in his empty cart, into the ditch.

"You see this?" says the coachman, showing the whip to the peasant, who was not quick enough in turning aside, and the peasant with one hand pulls the rein and with the other timidly pulls his cap off his lousy head.

Back of the carriage, glinting in the sun with the nickle-plated parts of their machines, noiselessly race two men and one woman on bicycles, and they laugh merrily, as they overtake and frighten the wandering women, who make the sign of the cross.

On the side-path of the highway pass two riders, — a man on an English cob, and a lady on an ambler. To say nothing of the cost of the horses and the saddles, the one black hat with the lilac veil cost two months' work of the stone-breakers, and for the fashionable English whip as much was paid as in a week will be earned by that young lad, who is happy that he has hired out to work underground in the mine, and who is getting out of the way, while admiring the sleek forms of the horses and riders, and the fat, imported, immense dog in an expen-

sive collar, which is running with protruding tongue back of them.

Not far from this company there travel in a cart a dressed-up, smiling maid, with curls, wearing a white apron, and a fat, ruddy man, with well-groomed side-whiskers, who is whispering something to the maid. In the cart may be seen a samovár, bundles in napkins, and an ice-cream freezer.

These are the servants of the people who are travelling in the carriage, on horseback, and on bicycles. The present day is nothing out of the ordinary. Thus they live the whole summer, going out for pleasure almost every day, and at times, as now, taking with them tea, beverages, and sweets, in order to eat and drink, not in the same, but in some new place.

These people are three families which are passing the summer in the country. One is the family of a proprietor, the owner of two thousand desyatínas of land, another that of an official, who receives a salary of three thousand roubles, and the third — the wealthiest family — the children of a manufacturer.

All these people are not in the least surprised or touched by the sight of all this poverty and hard labour by which they are surrounded. They think that all this must be so. They are interested in something quite different.

"No, that is impossible," says the lady on horseback, looking back at the dog, "I cannot see that!" and she stops the carriage. All talk together in French and laugh, and they put the dog into the carriage and proceed, covering the stone-breakers and the itinerants with clouds of lime dust.

And the carriage, the riders, the bicyclists, have flashed by like beings from another world; and the people in the foundry, the stone-breakers, the ploughmen continue their hard, monotonous work for somebody else, which will end with their lives.

“Some people have a fine time!” they think, as they watch the travellers off. And their painful existence appears still more painful to them.

## 2

What is this? Have these labouring people done something very criminal that they are punished thus? Or is this the lot of all men? And have those who passed by in the carriages and on the bicycles done something particularly useful and important that they are thus rewarded? Not in the least! On the contrary, those who are working with such tension are for the most part moral, continent, modest, industrious people; while those who passed by are for the most part corrupted, lustful, impudent, idle people. This is so, because such a structure of life is considered natural and regular in the world of men who assert that they are professing Christ's law of love of our neighbour, or that they are people of culture, that is, perfected people.

Such a structure exists, not only in that corner of Tíla County, which presents itself vividly to me, because I frequently see it, but everywhere, not only in Russia, — from St. Petersburg to Batum, — but also in France, — from Paris to Auvergne, — and in Italy, — from Rome to Palermo, — and in Germany, in Spain, in America, in Australia, and even in India and in China. Everywhere two or three people in a thousand live in such a way that, without doing anything for themselves, they in one day consume in food and drink as much as would support hundreds of people for a year; they wear clothes which cost thousands; live in palaces, where thousands of labouring people could find room; spend on their whims thousands of roubles and millions of work-days; others again, getting neither enough sleep nor enough food, work

above their strength, ruining their bodily and their spiritual health for these few elect.

For one class of women, when they are about to bear children, they send for a midwife, a doctor, sometimes for two doctors for one lying-in woman, and their layettes contain a hundred baby-shirts and swaddling-clothes with silk ribbons, and they get ready little wagons swinging on springs; the other class of women, the vast majority, bear children in any chance place and in any chance manner, without aid, swaddle them in rags, put them into bast cradles on straw, and are glad when they die.

The children of one class, while the mother is lying in bed for nine days, are taken care of by the midwife, the nurse, the wet-nurse; the children of the other class are not taken care of, because there is no one to do so, and the mother herself gets up immediately after childbirth, makes the fires in the oven, milks the cow, and sometimes washes the clothes for herself, her husband, and her children. One class of children grows up among toys, amusements, and instructions; the other children at first crawl with their bared bellies over thresholds, become maimed, are eaten up by pigs, and at five years of age begin to work above their strength. The first are taught all the scientific wisdom which is adapted to their age; the others learn vulgar curses and the most savage of superstitions. The first fall in love, carry on love-affairs, and then marry, after they have experienced all the pleasures of love; the others are married off to those whom the parents choose, between the ages of sixteen and twenty years, for the purpose of receiving additional aid. The first eat and drink the best and the most expensive things in the world, feeding their dogs on white bread and beef; the second eat nothing but bread and kvas, nor do they get enough bread, and what they get is stale, so that they may not eat too much of it. The first change their fine underwear every day, so as not to get soiled; the



second, who are constantly doing work for others, change their coarse, ragged, lousy underwear once in two weeks, or do not change it at all, but wear it until it falls to pieces. The first sleep between clean sheets, on feather beds; the second sleep on the ground, covering themselves with their tattered caftans.

The first drive out with well-fed horses, for no work, but simply for pleasure; the second work hard with ill-fed horses, and walk, if they have any business to attend to. The first wonder what to do, in order to occupy their leisure time; the second find no time to clean themselves, to wash, to take a rest, to say a word, to visit their relatives. The first read four languages and every day amuse themselves with the greatest variety of things; the second do not know how to read at all and know no other amusement than drunkenness. The first know everything and believe in nothing; the second know nothing and believe any nonsense that they are told. When the first get sick, they travel from place to place in search of the best curative air, to say nothing of all kinds of waters, every kind of attention, and every kind of cleanliness and medicine; the second lie down on the oven in a smoky hut, and with unwashed sores, and with the absence of any food but stale bread, and of all air but such as is infected by ten members of the family, and by the calves and sheep, rot alive and die before their time.

Must it be so?

If there is a higher reason and a love which guide the world, if there is a God, He cannot have wished to see such division among men, when one class of them do not know what to do with the surplus of their wealth and senselessly squander the fruit of the labours of other men, and the others grow sick and die before their time, or live an agonizing life, working above their strength.

If there is a God, this cannot and must not be. But if there is no God, such a structure of life, in which the

majority of men must waste their lives, so that a small number of men may enjoy an abundance, which only corrupts this minority and weighs heavily upon it, is, from the simplest human point of view, insipid, because it is disadvantageous for all men.

## 3

Why, then, do men live thus?

It is natural for the rich, who are used to their wealth and who do not see clearly that wealth does not give happiness, to try to maintain their position. But why does the vast majority, in whose hands is every power, assume that there is happiness in wealth, and continue to live in want and submit to the minority?

Indeed, why do all those men who are strong in muscles and in artisanship and in the habit of work — the vast majority of men — submit, give in to a handful of feeble people, pampered old men and mainly women, who for the most part are not fit for anything?

Take a walk before the holidays or during bargain weeks along the business streets, say through the Moscow Passages. Ten or twelve Passages, consisting of solid rows of magnificent shops with immense plate-glass windows, are all filled with all kinds of expensive wares, — exclusively feminine ones, — stuffs, dresses, laces, gems, foot-gear, house adornments, furs, and so forth. All these things cost millions and millions, all these articles have been manufactured in establishments by working people who frequently ruin their lives over this work, and all these articles are of no use, not only to the working people, but even to the wealthy men, — they are all amusements and adornments of women. At the entrances porters in galloons stand on both sides, and coachmen in expensive garments sit on the boxes of

expensive carriages, which are drawn by trotters that cost into the thousands. Again millions of working days have been wasted on the production of all the luxury of the harnesses: old and young working people, men and women, have devoted all their lives to the production of all these articles. And all these articles are in the power and in the hands of a few hundred women, who in expensive furs and hats of the latest fashion saunter through these shops and purchase all these articles, which are manufactured for them.

A few hundreds of women arbitrarily dispose of the labour of millions of working people, who work to support themselves and their families. On the whims of these women depend the fate, the lives of millions of people.

How did this happen?

Why do all these millions of strong people, who have manufactured these articles, submit to these women?

Now a lady in a velvet fur coat and a hat of the very latest fashion drives up with a span of trotters. Everything upon her is new and most expensive. A porter hurries to throw back the boot of her sleigh, and respectfully helps her out, by supporting her under her elbow. She walks down the Passage as though through her kingdom, enters one of the shops, and buys five thousand roubles' worth of material for her drawing-room, and, having given the order to send it up to her house, goes elsewhere. She is an evil, stupid, and not at all beautiful woman, who does not bear any children and has never done anything in her life for any one else. Why, then, do the porter, and the coachman, and the clerks fawn so servilely before her? And why has all that over which thousands of workmen have laboured become her property? Because she has money, and the porter, the coachman, the clerks, and the workmen in the factory need money, with which to support their families. The money is most convenient for them, and frequently can be gained

only by serving as a coachman, porter, clerk, workman in a factory.

And why has this woman money? She has money because people who have been driven off the land and have forgotten how to do any other work are living in her husband's factory, while her husband, giving the workmen as much as they must necessarily have for their support, takes all the profit from the factory, to the amount of several hundred thousands, for himself, and, not knowing what to do with the money, is glad to give it to his wife, for her to spend it on anything she may wish.

And here is another lady, in a still more luxurious carriage and garments, who is buying up all kinds of expensive and useless things in all kinds of shops. Where does she get the money from? She is the mistress of a wealthy landowner of twenty thousand *desyatínas*, which were given to his ancestor by a harlot queen for his debauchery with that old queen. This landowner owns all the land around a colony of peasants, and lets this land to the peasants at seventeen roubles per *desyatína*. The peasants pay this money, because without the land they would starve. And this money is now in the hands of the mistress, and with this money she buys things which have been made by other peasants, who have been driven off the land.

Here again a third rich woman, with her fiancé and mother, is walking down the Passage. This woman is about to marry, and she is buying bronzes and expensive dishes. She has money given her by her father, a distinguished official, who is receiving a salary of twelve thousand roubles. He gave his daughter a dowry of seven thousand roubles. This money was collected from import revenues and taxes, again from the peasants. These same taxes compelled the porter, who opens the door (he is a *Kalúga* peasant, — his wife and children are left at home), and the coachman, who brought them up (he is a *Túla*

peasant), and hundreds, and thousands, and millions of men, who work out in houses or in factories, — to leave their homes and to work on articles which are consumed by the ladies, who receive the money, which by the manufacturers, landowners, officials is collected from the profit in the factories, or from the land, or from the taxes.

Thus millions of workmen have submitted to these women, because one man has taken possession of a factory, in which people work, another has taken possession of the land, while a third has seized the taxes, which are collected from the labouring classes. It is this that produced that which I saw about the foundry.

The peasants ploughed somebody else's field, because they have not enough land, and he who owns the land permits them to use his land only on condition that they work for him. The stone-breakers broke rock, because only by means of this work were they able to pay the taxes demanded of them. In the foundry and in the mines the people worked, because the earth from which the ore is extracted and the smelter where it is smelted do not belong to them.

All these working people do hard work, not for themselves, because the rich have taken possession of the land, collect taxes, and own the plants.

## 4

Why does he who does not work, and not he who works, own the land ? Why do a small number of men make use of the taxes which are collected from all men, and not those who pay them ? Why are the factories owned, not by those who built them and work in them, but by a small number of men who did not build them and do not work in them ?

To the question as to why non-workers have seized the land of the workers the customary answer is, that that is

so, because the land was given them for their deserts or bought with money earned. To the question as to why one set of men, a small number of men, the non-working managers and their helpers, collect for themselves the greater share of the wealth of all the working people, and use it at will, the customary answer is this, that the men who use the money which is collected from the masses manage the others and defend them and preserve order and decency among them. And to the question as to why rich people of leisure own the products and implements of the labour of the working people, the answer is that these productions and implements of labour were earned by them or by their ancestors.

And all these men — the landowners, the servants of the government, the merchants, the manufacturers — are sincerely convinced that their possession is quite just, — that they have the right to such a possession.

However, neither the possession of the land, nor the collection of the taxes and use of them, nor the possession of the products and implements of labour by people of leisure, has any justification. The possession of land by those who do not work upon it has no justification, because the land, like the water, the air, the sunbeams, forms an indispensable condition of the life of every man and so cannot be the exclusive possession of one person. If the land, and not the water, the air, and the sunbeams, has become an object of possession, this is not due to the fact that the land is not just as indispensable and appropriate a condition for the existence of any man, but only because it has been impossible to deprive people of water, air, and sun, while it has been possible to deprive them of the land.

The ownership of land, having originated in violence (through conquest people appropriated the land, and then gave it away and sold it), has remained, in spite of every effort at turning it into a right, nothing but an act of

violence of the strong and armed against the weak and unarmed.

Let a man, who is working the land, violate this imaginary right, let him plough the land which is considered to be the property of another, and there will soon appear that on which this supposed right is based, — at first in the form of policemen, and then in the form of a military force, — of soldiers, — who will stab and shoot those who are trying to make use of their real right to support themselves by means of work on the land. Thus, what is called the right to the ownership of land is nothing but violence exerted against all those who may have need of this land. The right to the land is like the right to a road which robbers have seized and over which they do not permit people to travel without a ransom.

A still lesser semblance of justification can be found for the right of the government to a forcible levy of the taxes. It is asserted that the taxes are used for the defence of the government against foreign enemies, for the establishment and support of domestic order, and for the execution of necessary public works.

But, in the first place, foreign enemies have long ago ceased to exist, even according to the declarations of the governments themselves: they all assure their nations that they wish for nothing but peace. The Emperor of Germany wants peace, the French republic wants peace, England wants peace, and Russia wants the same. Still more urgently do the Transvaalers and the Chinese want peace. So against whom are we to defend ourselves?

In the second place, in order to give up the money for the establishment of domestic order and public works, it is necessary to be sure that the men who establish order will do so, and, besides, that this order will be good and that the public works to be executed will actually be needed by society. But if, as is always and everywhere repeated, those who pay the taxes are not convinced of

the fitness, or even of the honesty of those who establish order, and, besides, consider the order itself to be bad and the public works about to be executed not such as the tax-payers need, it is evident that there is no right to collect taxes, but only violence.

I remember the utterance of a Russian peasant, who was religious and, therefore, truly liberal. Like Thoreau, he did not consider it just to pay taxes for things which his conscience did not approve of, and when he was asked to pay his share of the taxes, he asked what the taxes which he would pay would be used for, saying, "If the taxes shall be used for a good thing, I will at once give you not only what you demand, but even more; but if they shall be used for something bad, I cannot and will not give a kopek of my own free will."

Of course, they lost no time with him, but broke down his closed gate, carried off his cow, and sold it for the taxes. Thus in reality there is but one true and real cause of taxes,—the power which collects them,—the possibility of robbing those who do not give the taxes willingly, and even of beating them for a refusal, of putting them in prison, and of punishing them—as is actually done.

The fact that in England, in France, in America, and in general in constitutional governments, the taxes are determined by the parliament, that is, by the supposed representatives of the people gathered together, does not change the matter, because the elections are so arranged that the members of the parliament do not represent the people, but are politicians, and if they were not to start with, they become such as soon as they get into parliament, and are busy with their personal ambition and the interests of the warring parties.

Just as groundless are the justifications of the supposed right of ownership, which the leisure people claim in respect to the products of the labour of other people,



This right of ownership, which is even called a sacred right, is generally justified on the ground that property is the result of continence and of an industrious activity, which is useful to men. But we need only analyze the origin of great fortunes, to be convinced of the contrary.

Fortunes always originate, either in violence, — this is most common, — or in nastiness, or in rascality on a large scale, or in chronic cheating, like what is practised by merchants. The more a man is moral, the more certain he is to be deprived of the fortune which he has, and the more he is immoral, the more certain he is to gain and retain a fortune. Popular wisdom says that one cannot earn stone palaces with righteous labour, — that labour gives one stooping shoulders, and not wealth. Thus it was, indeed, of old, and it is still more true of the present, when the distribution of wealth has long ago taken place in a most irregular manner. Though we may admit that in primitive society a more abstemious and industrious man will gain more than an incontinent man, who does not work much, nothing of the kind is true for our present society. No matter how abstemious and industrious a man, a labourer, may be, who is working on somebody else's land, who purchases at a price established for him such articles as he may need, and who works with other people's implements of labour, he will never acquire any wealth. But the most incontinent and idle of men, — as we see in the case of thousands of individuals, — who stands in with the government or with rich men, who busies himself with usury, with a manufactory, a house of prostitution, a bank, the sale of liquor, will easily acquire a fortune.

The laws which are supposed to protect property are laws which only protect property which has been stolen, which is already in the hands of the rich, and they not only fail to protect the labourers, who have no prop-

erty, except their labour, but even aid in robbing them of this labour.

We see an endless number of administrators,—the Tsar, his brothers, uncles, ministers, judges, the clergy,—who receive enormous salaries, collected from the people, and who do not even attend to those easy duties which they have undertaken to attend to for this remuneration. And so, it would seem, these people steal the salary collected from the masses, that is, the property of the masses, but it does not even occur to any one to condemn them.

But let a labourer make use of even a part of the money received by these people, or of the objects bought with this money, and it will be said that he has violated the sacred ownership, and for this sum which he has made use of he is sentenced, imprisoned, and deported.

A manufacturer, who is a millionaire, promises to pay the labouring man a wage which for him, the manufacturer, represents one ten-millionth part of his fortune, that is, almost nothing; but the labourer puts himself under obligation, in consequence of his want, in the course of the year to furnish, with the exception of the holidays, his daily work of twelve hours, which is dangerous and harmful for his health, that is, he puts himself under obligation to give the manufacturer the greater part of his life, perhaps his whole life; and the government protects alike either kind of ownership.

With this the manufacturer, as is well known, year in and year out robs the labourer of the greater share of his earnings, and appropriates it to himself. It would seem to be obvious that the manufacturer robs the labourer of the greater half of his property, and so ought to be made responsible for it; but the government considers the manufacturer's property thus gained to be sacred, and punishes the labourer who under his coat carries off two

pounds of copper, which forms one-billionth part of the manufacturer's property.

Let the labourer try, as happens during the anti-Jewish riots, to take away from the rich ever so small a part of what was lawfully taken from the labourers: let a starving man, as lately occurred in Milan, appropriate a loaf, which, taking advantage of the famine, the rich are selling at a high price to the labourers; or let a labourer by means of a strike endeavour to get back a small part of what was taken from him,—he violates the sacred right of property, and the government immediately comes with its army to the succour of the landowner, the manufacturer, the merchant, against the labourer. Thus the right on which the rich base their ownership of the land, the right to levy taxes and possess the products of labour of other people, has nothing in common with justice, and all of it is based on nothing but violence, which is produced by the army.

## 5

Let a farmer try to plough the field which he needs for his support; let him endeavour to refuse to pay the taxes,—either direct or indirect; let him try to take provisions of corn which he has not earned, or implements of labour, without which he cannot work,—and the army will appear and will use force to keep him from doing so.

Thus the alienation from the land, the levy of taxes, the power of the capitalists, form, not the cause, but the result of the wretched condition of the labourers. The fundamental cause why millions of labourers live and work at the will of the minority does not lie in this, that the minority has seized upon the land, and upon the implements of production, and receives the taxes, but in this, that it *can* do so,—that there is violence, an army, which is in the hands of the minority and is ready to kill those who do not wish to do the will of this minority.

When the peasants want to take possession of the land which is considered to be the property of a man of leisure, or when a man does not want to pay the taxes, or when the strikers want to keep other labourers from taking their places, there appear the same peasants, whose land has been taken away, the payers of taxes and the labourers, except that they wear uniforms and bear arms, and they compel their brothers—who are not in uniforms—to go away from the land, to pay taxes, and to stop the strike.

When a man comes to understand this at first, he can hardly believe it, it seems so strange.

The working people want to free themselves, and the working people themselves compel themselves to submit and to remain in slavery.

Why do they do so?

Because the working people, drafted or hired into the army, are subjected to an artificial process of stupefaction and corruption, after which they cannot help but obey their superiors blindly, no matter what they may compel them to do.

This is done in the following manner: a boy is born in the country or in the city. In all the Continental countries, as soon as the boy reaches the age when his strength, agility, and flexibility have reached the highest point, while his spiritual forces are in a most dim and indeterminate state (about twenty years), he is taken into the army, is examined like a beast of burden, and when he is found to be able-bodied, he is attached to some particular part of the army, and is made solemnly to swear that he will slavishly obey his superiors; then he is removed from all the former conditions of his life, is filled up with whiskey or beer, is dressed up in motley garments, and is with other lads like him locked up in barracks, where he is in absolute idleness (that is, doing no useful or rational work), is taught the most insipid military rules

and names of objects, and the use of the implements of murder, — the sword, the bayonet, the rifle, the cannon, — and, above all, is taught, not only blind, but even mechanically reflex obedience to the superiors put over him. Thus it is done in the countries where there is military service; where it does not exist, men specially appointed for the purpose look up for the most part dissipated, but strong men, who have fallen from the right way and either do not wish, or are unable to live by honest labour, fill them with liquor, bribe them, and enlist them in the army, and similarly shut them up in barracks and subject them to the same discipline. The chief problem of the superiors consists in bringing these men to the state of the frog which, when touched, uncontrollably jerks its leg. A good soldier is he who, like this frog, in response to certain shouts of his superior, unconsciously makes the motion demanded. This is obtained by making these unfortunate men, who are dressed in the same motley uniform, for weeks, months, and years, at the sound of the drum and of music, walk, twist around, jump, and do it all together, in a body, and by command. Every failure to obey is punished with the most cruel punishments, even with death. With this, drunkenness, debauchery, idleness, vulgarity, murder are not only not prohibited, but even established: the soldiers are given whiskey, houses of prostitution are arranged for them, they are taught obscene songs, and instructed in murder. (Murder is in this circle of men considered to such an extent a good and praiseworthy matter that under certain conditions the superiors, the officers, are demanded to kill a friend, which is called a duel.) And so a meek and peaceable fellow, after having passed in such a school about a year (before that time the soldier is not yet ready, that is, he has still some human qualities left in him), is turned into what he is wanted to be, — a senseless, cruel, mighty, and terrible instrument of violence in the hands of his superiors.

Whenever I in the winter walk in Moscow past the palace, and near the booth see a young lad, the sentinel, who in his heavy sheepskin fur coat is standing or walking, plashing his enormous overshoes on the sidewalk, supporting on his shoulder a rifle of the latest fashion, with its bayonet sharpened, I always look into his eyes, and every time he turns his glance away from me, and every time I think: a year or two years ago he was a merry village lad, natural, good-natured, who would cheerfully have talked to me in his good Russian, telling me, with the consciousness of his peasant dignity, his whole history; now he looks maliciously and gloomily at me, and to all my questions knows only how to say, "Yes, sir," and, "Can't know, sir." If I should enter through the door at which he is standing, — I always feel like doing so, — or should put my hand on his gun, he would without a minute's hesitation stick the bayonet through my abdomen, would pull the bayonet out of the wound, would wipe it off, and would continue to walk, plashing with his overshoes on the asphaltum, until the arrival of the relief with the corporal, who would whisper the watchword into his ear. And he is not the only one. In Moscow alone, I think, there are thousands of such lads, almost children, who are turned into machines and are armed with guns. There are millions of them in the whole of Russia and in the whole world. These unthinking, but strong and agile lads are picked up, corrupted, and bribed, and, thanks to them, the world is held in subjection. All that is terrible. What is terrible is this, that bad, idle people, thanks to these deceived men, are in possession of all those palaces and all that criminally acquired wealth, that is, of the labour of all the masses. But most terrible is this, that, to do so, they have to bestialize these simple, good fellows, and in this they have partly succeeded.

Let those who own wealth defend it themselves. That would not be so disgusting. But what is terrible is this,

that, to rob the people and defend what has been stolen, they use those very people whom they rob, and for this purpose corrupt their souls.

Thus the soldiers, taken from the labouring classes, use violence against their own brother labourers, because there exists a means for making of people an unconscious instrument of murder, and the governments, in drafting or enlisting soldiers, make use of that means in regard to them.

## 6

But if that is so, there involuntarily appears the question as to why people become soldiers. Why do their fathers let them become soldiers ?

They could become soldiers and be subject to discipline so long as they did not see the consequences of it. But, having once come to see what results from it, why do they continue to subject themselves to this deception ?

This is due to the fact that they consider military service not only useful, but unquestionably honourable and good. And they consider it such, because they have been impressed with it by that doctrine to which they are subjected from their childhood and in which they are maintained in their adult age.

And so the existence of the army is also no fundamental cause, but only an effect. The fundamental cause is to be found in that doctrine which is inculcated upon people, that military service, which has for its purpose the killing of men, is not only sinless, but also good, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Thus the cause of the wretched condition of the men lies still farther away than it seems to at first.

At first it seems that the whole matter lies in this, that the landowners have seized the land, the capitalists have taken possession of the implements of labour, while the government takes forcibly the taxes ; but when one asks

himself why the land belongs to the rich and the working people cannot make use of it, and why not the working people, but the capitalists, are in possession of the implements of production, one sees that this is due to the fact that there is an army which secures the land to the rich, collects the taxes from the labourers for the use of the rich, and secures the factories and the expensive machines to the rich. If one asks oneself how it is that the working people, who form the army and from whom everything is taken which they need, attack themselves, their fathers and brothers, one sees that the cause of it is this, that the drafted or enlisted soldiers are, by means of methods specially adapted for the purpose, instructed in such a way that they lose everything human and are turned into unconscious instruments of murder, ever submissive to their superiors. When, finally, one asks oneself why people, seeing such deception, continue to enter the army or to pay taxes to hire an army, one sees that the cause of it lies in the doctrine, which is inculcated, not only upon those who are taken into the army, but also upon all men alike, — a doctrine according to which military service is a good and praiseworthy cause, and murder in war is innocent.

Thus the fundamental cause of everything is the doctrine which is inculcated upon the people.

From this come poverty, and debauchery, and hatred, and punishments, and murder.

What is this doctrine?

This doctrine is called Christian, and consists in the following: there is a God, who six thousand years ago created the world and the man Adam. Adam sinned, and God for this punished all men, and then sent His son, just such a God as the Father, down upon earth, to have Him hanged there! This very hanging serves to men as a means of redemption from their punishment for Adam's sin.



If people believe in this, they will be forgiven Adam's sin ; if they do not, they will be punished cruelly. -The proof of all this being true is found in the fact that all this was revealed to men by that same God, about whose existence we have learned from those same men who preach all that. To say nothing of the different variations in this fundamental doctrine, in accordance with the different denominations, the general practical deduction from it in all the denominations is the same, namely, that men must believe in what is preached to them and must obey the existing authorities.

It is this doctrine that forms the fundamental cause of the deception, according to which people, considering military service to be useful and good, enter the army, and, being turned into machines without a will, oppress themselves. If there are unbelievers among the deceived, these unbelievers do not believe in anything else, and, in consequence, since they have no point of support, submit, like the believers, to the general current, although they see the deception.

And so, to destroy the evil from which men suffer, we need, not the liberation of the land, nor the abolition of the taxes, nor the nationalization of the implements of production, nor even the overthrow of the existing government, but the destruction of that false doctrine, called Christian, in which the men of our time are brought up.

## 7

At first it seems strange to people who know the Gospel how it was possible for Christianity, which preaches the sonhood to God, spiritual freedom, the brotherhood of men, the abolition of all violence, and the love of our neighbours, to have degenerated into this strange doctrine, called Christian, which preaches blind obedience to the authorities, and murder, whenever the authorities demand

it. But when one stops to think of the process by means of which Christianity has entered into the world, one sees that it could not have been otherwise.

When the pagan sovereigns, Constantine, Charlemagne, Vladimir, accepted Christianity, which was swaddled in pagan forms, and baptized their nations into it, it did not even occur to them that the teaching which they accepted disrupted their regal power, and the army, and the state itself; that is, all that without which life could not be imagined by all those who were the first to accept and introduce Christianity. The destructive force of Christianity at first was not at all perceptible to men; on the contrary, they thought that Christianity supported their power. But the longer the Christian nations existed, the clearer and clearer became the essence of Christianity, and the more obvious became the danger with which Christianity threatened the pagan order. The more this danger became obvious, the more carefully did the ruling classes try to subdue and, if possible, to put out the fire, which they unconsciously brought into the world together with Christianity. They used every possible means for this,—the prohibition to translate and read the gospels, the slaying of all those who pointed out the true meaning of the Christian teaching, the hypnotization of the masses by means of the solemnity and splendour of surroundings, and, above all, shrewd and refined interpretations of the Christian tenets. In proportion as these means were used, Christianity changed more and more, and finally became a doctrine which had in itself nothing dangerous for the pagan order of things, and even justified the pagan order from an apparently Christian point of view. There appeared even Christian rulers, and a Christ-loving army, and Christian wealth, and Christian courts, and Christian punishments.

The ruling classes did the same in relation to Christianity that physicians do in relation to infectious diseases.

They worked out a culture of harmless Christianity, which, when inoculated, makes the real Christianity innocuous. This ecclesiastic Christianity is such that it inevitably either repels sensible people, presenting itself to them as a terrible insipidity, or, being adopted by men, to such an extent removes them from true Christianity that through it they no longer see its real significance and even look upon its true significance with hostility and fury.

It is this innocuous, false Christianity, which from a sense of self-preservation has been worked out through the ages among the ruling classes, and with which the masses are inoculated, which forms the doctrine in consequence of which men calmly commit acts that are harmful to themselves and to their neighbours, and that are even directly immoral and incompatible with the demands of conscience, the most important of which, from its practical consequences, is the entrance into the army, that is, the readiness to commit murder.

The harm of this innocuous, false Christianity consists chiefly in this, that it prescribes nothing and forbids nothing. All the ancient teachings — like the law of Moses and the law of Manu — give rules which demand or forbid certain acts; such also are the Buddhist and the Mohammedan religions; but the ecclesiastic faith gives no rules whatever, except a verbal confession, the recognition of dogmas, fasts, holy sacrament, prayers (and for these even excuses have been invented for the rich), but only lies, and permits everything, even what is contrary to the lowest demands of morality. According to this ecclesiastic faith everything is allowed: it is allowed to own slaves (in Europe and in America the church has been the defender of slavery); it is allowed to acquire wealth, which is got through the labour of our oppressed brothers; it is not only allowed to be rich amidst Lazaruses who crawl under the tables of the feasting, but it is even good

and laudable to do so, if one-thousandth is contributed for churches and hospitals. The church gives its blessing to the forcible defence of our wealth against the needy, to the imprisonment of men in solitary cells, to chaining them up, to fastening them to wheelbarrows, and to executing them ; it is allowed to commit debauchery during one's whole youth, and then to call one such debauchery marriage and get the church's permission for it ; it is allowed to get a divorce and again be married ; it is possible, above all, to kill, not only in one's own defence, but also in defence of one's apples, and as a punishment (punishment means instruction, — to kill as an instruction !), and, above all else, it is right and laudable to kill in war, by command of the authorities — the church not only permits, but even commands it.

Thus the root of all is in the false doctrine.

Let the false doctrine be destroyed, and there will be no army ; and if there is no army, there will naturally be destroyed all the acts of violence, the oppression, the corruption, which now are practised on the nations. But so long as men shall be brought up in the pseudo-Christian teaching, which permits everything, including murder, the army will be in the hands of the minority ; and this minority will always make use of this army for the purpose of depriving the masses of the products of their labour and, what is still worse, for the corruption of the masses, because without the corruption of the masses it could not take away from them the products of their labours.

## 8

The root of all the wretchedness of the masses lies in that false doctrine which is taught to them under guise of Christianity.

And so it would seem to be obvious that the duty of every man who has freed himself from the religious de-

ception and who wishes to serve the masses is in words and deeds to help the deceived men to free themselves from that deception, which forms the cause of their wretched condition. It would seem that, besides the general duty of every moral man to arraign the lies and profess the truth which he knows, every one who wishes to serve the masses cannot help but wish out of sympathy to free his brothers from the deception which causes them all kinds of unhappiness and in which they abide. And yet these same people, who are free from the deception, are independent, and have been educated at the expense of the working classes, and for this reason alone are obliged to serve them, but fail to see this.

"The religious teaching is not important," say these people. "It is a matter for each man's conscience. What is important and necessary is the political, social, economic structure of society, and to this should be directed all the efforts of men who wish to serve the masses. But the religious teachings are all of them of no importance, and, like all superstitions, they will disappear in their time."

Thus speak the cultured people, and, wishing to serve the masses, some of them enter the service of the government,—the army, the clergy, the parliament,—and try, without arraigning the religious deception in which the masses are, by their participation in the governmental activity to improve the external forms of the life of the deceived masses; others, the revolutionists, who just as little touch upon the beliefs of the masses, enter into a struggle with the governments, trying to take possession of the power by the same means of deception and violence that are practised by the governments; others again, the socialists, establish labour-unions, societies, strikes, assuming that the condition of the masses, in spite of their remaining in the same error of superstition and ignorance which is produced by the false doctrine, can be

ameliorated. But none of them hinder the dissemination of the false religion, on which all the evil is based, and when the necessity for it arises, they even perform the religious rites, which they consider to be false,—they themselves take the oath, take part in divine services and solemnities which stultify the masses, and do not interfere with the instruction given to their own children and to those of others in what is called religion, that very lie on which the enslavement of the masses is based. This failure to comprehend in what lies the main cause of the evil (and the cultured people could and should more than any others help destroy this false doctrine), and to what all their efforts ought more particularly to be directed, and the deviation of the efforts upon false paths, form one of the chief causes why the existing structure of life, which is obviously false and pernicious for people, is persistently maintained, in spite of its well-recognized incompatibility.

All the calamities of our world are due to this, that the true Christian teaching, which corresponds to the demands of our time, is concealed from men, and that in its place a false doctrine is preached.

If the men who want to serve God and their neighbours only comprehended that humanity is not moved by animal demands, but by spiritual forces, that the chief spiritual force which moves humanity is religion, that is, the determination of the meaning of life, and, in consequence of this meaning, the distinction between good and evil, and between what is important and unimportant. If men only understood that, they would see at once that the fundamental cause of the calamities of humanity at present does not lie in external material causes,—not in political, nor in economic conditions, but in the distortion of the Christian religion: in the substitution for the truths needed by humanity and corresponding to its present age, of a collection of senseless, immoral insipidi-

ties and blasphemies, called the ecclesiastic faith, by means of which what is not good is considered good, and what is unimportant is considered important, and vice versa,—what is good is considered bad, and what is important — unimportant.

If only the best, the independent people, who sincerely wish to serve the masses, understood that it is impossible by any external measures to improve the condition of a man who considers it bad to eat meat on Friday and good to punish a guilty man with death, and important to show proper respect for an image or for the emperor, and unimportant to swear to do the will of other people and to learn to commit murder ; if men only understood that no parliaments, strikes, unions, consumers' and producers' leagues, inventions, schools, universities, and academies, no revolutions, can be of any essential value to people with a false religious world-conception, all the forces of the best people would naturally be directed upon the cause, and not upon the effect,—not upon the state activity, upon revolutions, upon socialism, but upon the arraignment of the false religious doctrine and the establishment of the true teaching.

If men would only act thus, all the political, economical, and social questions would solve themselves naturally, as they ought to be solved, and not as we foretell or prescribe.

All these questions will, naturally, not be solved at once and according to our wish, as we are accustomed to arrange the lives of other people, caring only for this, that externally these lives should resemble what we want them to be (precisely what all the governments are doing) ; but these questions will certainly be solved, if only the religious world-conception of the people shall be changed, and they will be solved the more quickly, the more we shall apply our forces, not to the effects, but to the causes of phenomena.

But the arraignment of the false religion and the assertion of the true religion are a very distant and slow means, we are told. Whether it be distant or slow, it is the only means, or, at least, such that without it all other means will be ineffective.

As I look at the structure of human life, which is contrary to reason and to feeling, I ask myself: "Need it be so?"

And the answer at which I arrive is, that it need not be so.

It need not be, it must not be, and it will not be.

But it will not be, not when men shall in one way or another reconstruct their relations, but only when men shall stop believing in the lie in which they are brought up, and shall believe in the highest truth, which was revealed nineteen hundred years ago, and which is clear, simple, and accessible to their reason.

*Yásnaya Polyána, October 14, 1900.*

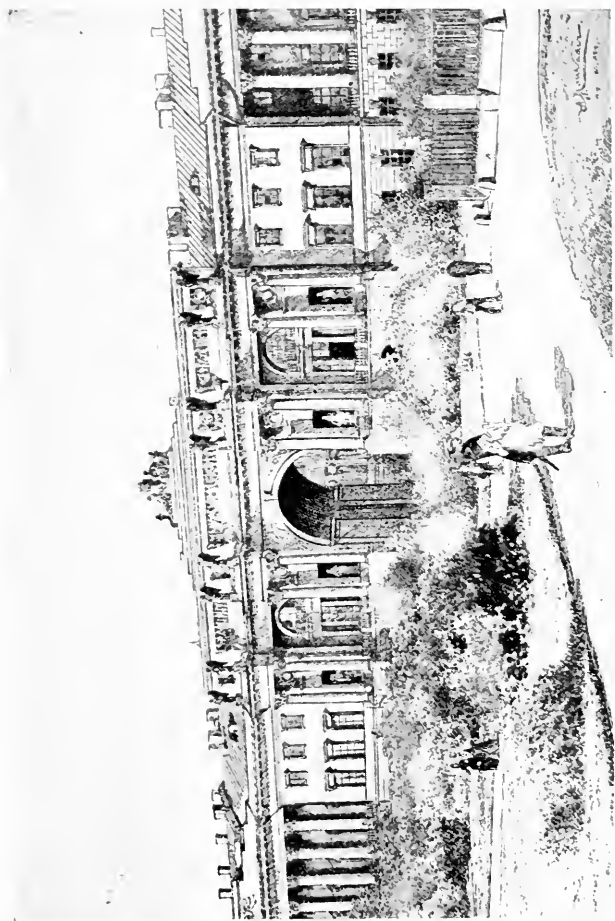


## ANSWER

To the Decree of the Synod of February 20-22  
and to Letters Received by Me on That  
Occasion

1901





*The Department of the Holy Synod at St. Petersburg.*



# ANSWER

To the Decree of the Synod of February 20-22  
and to Letters Received by Me on That  
Occasion

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“He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth  
will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than  
Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all.” —  
*Coleridge.*

At first I had no intention of answering the decree of the Synod concerning me, but this decree called forth a very large number of letters, in which correspondents who are unknown to me either scold me for denying what I do not deny, or admonish me to believe in what I have not stopped believing in, or again express their fellowship of ideas with me, which hardly exists in reality, and their sympathy, to which I have hardly a right; and so I have decided to answer the decree itself, pointing out what is unjust in it, and the letters of my correspondents, whom I do not know.

The decree of the Synod has, in general, very many faults. It is illegal, or intentionally ambiguous; it is arbitrary, ungrounded, untruthful, and, besides, contains libel and incitements to evil sentiments and acts.

It is illegal, or intentionally ambiguous, because, if it is meant to be an excommunication from the church, it does not satisfy those ecclesiastic rules by which such an ex-

communication may be pronounced ; but if it is a declaration that he who does not believe in the church and its dogmas does not belong to it, that is self-understood, and such a declaration can have no other aim than this, that, though it is in reality not an excommunication, it may appear as such, which actually happened, for it was understood as such.

It is arbitrary, because it accuses me alone of unbelief in all the points mentioned in the decree, whereas not only many persons, but almost all educated people share such unbelief, and have constantly expressed it in conversations, and in writing, and in pamphlets, and in books.

It is ungrounded, because as the chief cause for its issuance is given the great dissemination of false doctrine, which corrupts people, whereas it is well known to me that there are hardly a hundred men who share my views, and that the dissemination of my ideas about religion, thanks to the censorship, is so insignificant that the majority of men who have read the decree of the Senate have not the slightest idea as to what I have written about religion, as may be seen from the letters which I have received.

It contains an obvious untruth, because it says in it that on the part of the church there have been made attempts at appealing to my conscience, but that they were not successful. Nothing of the kind has ever happened.

It represents what in juridical language is called a libel, because it contains professedly untrue statements, which are intended to injure me.

It is, finally, an incitement to bad sentiments and acts, because it has provoked, as was to have been expected, in unenlightened and unthinking people malice and hatred against me, which rise to threats of assassination and are expressed in the letters received by me: "Now you are given over to anathema, and after your death you will

go to everlasting torments and will die like a dog — anathema, old devil — be cursed,” writes one. Another rebukes the government for not having yet locked me up in a monastery, and fills his letter with curses. A third writes: “If the government does not take you away, we will ourselves make you shut up;” the letter ends with curses. “To make an end of you, scavenger, we shall find the means for it,” writes a fourth; there follow indecent curses. Similar signs of malice I have, since the decree of the Synod, observed in meeting certain people. On the very 25th of February, when the decree was published, I heard, as I crossed a square, the words, “Here is a devil in human form,” and if the crowd had been differently composed, it is very likely that I should have been beaten, as some years ago they beat a man near Panteleymónov Tower.

Thus the decree of the Synod is altogether bad; the fact that at the end of the decree it says that the persons signing it pray that I may become such as they are does not make matters any better.

So it is in general; in particular this decree is not just for the following reasons. In the decree it says: “The world-known writer, Russian by birth, Orthodox by baptism and education, Count Tolstóy, in the blindness of his proud mind, boldly arose against the Lord and against His Christ and His sacred charge, and openly, in the presence of all men, renounced the Orthodox Mother Church, which has nurtured and educated him.”

That I have renounced the church which calls itself Orthodox is quite true.

But I have not renounced it because I arose against the Lord, but, on the contrary, because I wished with all my heart to serve Him. Before renouncing the church and the union with the people, which had been inexpressibly dear to me, I, having from certain symptoms come to doubt the truth of the church, devoted several years to the

theoretic and the practical investigation of the church doctrine: in the theoretic investigation I read everything I could about the church doctrine, and studied and critically analyzed the dogmatic theology; in the practical investigation I for the period of more than a year strictly followed all the prescriptions of the church, observing all the fasts and all the church celebrations. And I convinced myself that the doctrine of the church was in theory a cunning and harmful deceit, and in practice a collection of the grossest superstitions and sorcery, which completely conceals the whole meaning of the Christian teaching.<sup>1</sup>

I actually renounced the church, stopped executing its rites, and asked my relatives in my will not to admit any church servants at my death, and to take my body away as quickly as possible, without any magical formulæ and prayers, as they take away every nauseating and useless thing, that it may not trouble the living.

But as to its saying that "I devoted my literary activity and God-given talent to the dissemination among the masses of teachings which are contrary to Christ and to the church," and so forth, and that "in my writings and letters which are scattered by me and my disciples in great numbers all over the world, but especially within the boundaries of our beloved country, I with the zeal of

<sup>1</sup> We need only read the ritual, to follow those ceremonies which without cessation are performed by the Orthodox clergy, and are considered to be Christian divine service, to see that all these ceremonies are nothing but various methods of sorcery, adapted for all incidents of life. For a child after death to go to heaven, it has to be anointed with oil and bathed while certain words are enunciated; for a woman in childbirth no longer to be unclean, certain magical formulæ have to be pronounced; for success in some affair or peaceful life in a new house, for a crop of corn to be good, for a drought to be broken, for a cure from some disease, for an improvement in the condition of a deceased man in the other world, — for all that and thousands of other circumstances there are certain magical formulæ, which in return for certain offerings are pronounced by a priest in a certain place. — *Author's Note.*



a fanatic preach the overthrow of all the dogmas of the Orthodox Church and of the very essence of the Christian religion," that is not true. I have never had any thought as to the dissemination of my teaching. It is true, I have for my own sake expressed in my writings my understanding of Christ's teaching, and have not concealed these writings from men who wished to become acquainted with them, but I never printed them myself, and I told people about the way I understood Christ's teaching only when I was asked about it. To such people I told what I thought, and I gave them my books, if I had any.

Then it says that I deny "God, the Creator and Provider of the universe, glorified in the Holy Trinity, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, who suffered for the sake of us men and for the sake of our salvation, and who rose from the dead," and that I deny "the seedless conception of the Lord Christ in His manhood, and the virginity of the Immaculate Mother of God before and after His birth." It is quite true that I deny the incomprehensible Trinity, the now senseless fable about the fall of the first man, the blasphemous history of a God born of a virgin, who redeems the human race. But I not only do not deny God the Spirit, God — love, the one God, the beginning of everything, but even do not recognize anything as actually existing outside of God, and see the whole meaning of life only in the fulfilment of God's will, as expressed in the Christian teaching.

Again it says: "He does not recognize the life after death, and retribution." If the life after death is to be taken in the sense of the second advent, hell with its everlasting torments and devils, and heaven — a constant bliss, it is quite true that I do not recognize such a life after death; but the eternal life and retribution here and everywhere I recognize to such an extent that, standing on account of my years on the brink of the grave, I have

often to make efforts in order not to wish for carnal death, that is, for a birth to a new life, and I believe that every good act increases the true good of my everlasting life, and that every bad act diminishes it.

It also says that I deny all the sacraments. That is quite true. All the sacraments I consider a low, coarse sorcery, which does not harmonize with the conception of a God and with the Christian teaching, and, besides, is a violation of the directest precepts of the Gospel. In the baptism of children I see an obvious distortion of all that meaning which baptism may have had for adults, who consciously accepted Christianity; in the performance of the sacrament of marriage on people who are known to have come together before, and in the admission of divorcees, and in the sanctification of marriages of divorced people I see a direct violation of the meaning and the letter of the Gospel teaching.

In the periodic forgiveness of sins at confessions I see an injurious deception, which only encourages immorality and destroys the fear of sinning.

In the unction with chrism, as well as in the anointment, I see the methods of gross sorcery, as also in the worship of images and relics, and also in all those ceremonies, prayers, incantations, with which the ritual is filled. In communion I see the deification of the flesh and a distortion of the Christian teaching. In priesthood I see, besides an obvious preparation for deceit, a direct violation of the words of Christ, who directly forbade any one to be called teacher, father, instructor (Matt. xxiii. 8-10).

It says, finally, that, as the last and highest degree of my guilt, "I make light of the most sacred objects of faith, and have not stopped before ridiculing the most sacred of sacraments,—the Eucharist." It is quite true that I have not stopped before describing simply and objectively what a priest does for the preparation of this so-called

sacrament ; but it is quite untrue that this so-called sacrament is something sacred and that it is blasphemy to describe it simply, just as it is done. It is not blasphemy to call a partition a partition and not an iconostasis, a cup a cup, and not a poterion, and so forth ; but it is a terrible, unceasing, shocking blasphemy for people to use all the possible means of deceit and hypnotization, and to assure the children and the simple masses that, if bits of bread are cut in a certain way and while pronouncing certain words, and are put into wine, God enters into these bits ; that he in whose name, when living, a bit is taken out, will be well, and that he in whose name, when dead, such a piece is taken out, will fare better in the world to come ; and that into him who eats this piece God will enter.

That is terrible !

No matter how one may understand Christ's personality, His teaching, which destroys the evil of the world, which so simply, easily, and indubitably gives the good to men, if only they shall not distort it, — this teaching is all concealed, all changed into a gross sorcery of bathing, smearing with oil, motions of the body, incantations, swallowing of pieces, and so forth, so that nothing is left of the teaching. And if any man tries to remind these people that Christ's teaching is not in these sorceries, not in Te Deums, masses, tapers, images, but in this, that men should love one another, should not pay evil with evil, should not judge, should not kill one another, there arises the indignation of those to whom this deception is advantageous, and these men in the hearing of all and with incredible boldness say in the churches and print in books, newspapers, and catechisms that Christ never forbade swearing (oath of allegiance), never forbade murder (executions, wars), and that the doctrine of non-resistance to evil was with satanic cunning invented by Christ's foes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Speech of Amvrósi, the Bishop of Khárkov. — *Author's Note.*

What above all else is terrible is this, that people to whom this is advantageous deceive not only adults, but, since they have the power for it, children also, those same children of whom Christ says that woe shall be to him who shall deceive them. What is terrible is this, that these men for the sake of their petty advantages do such a terrible evil, by concealing from men the truth which was revealed by Christ and which gives the good, and not one-thousandth part of which is balanced by advantage which they derive from the evil. They act like that robber who kills a whole family, five or six people, in order to carry off an old sleeveless coat and forty kopeks in money. They would have gladly given him all their apparel and all their money, if only he would not kill them; but he cannot act differently.

The same is true of religious deceivers. They could be supported ten times better, in the greatest luxury, if only they did not ruin people with their deceit. But they cannot act differently. It is this that is so terrible. And so it is not only possible, but even necessary to arraign their deception. If there is anything sacred, it is certainly not that which they call a sacrament, but this duty of arraigning their religious deception, when you see it.

When a Chuvash smears his idol with cream and scourges it, I can do so as not to offend his belief, and pass by with equanimity, because he does this in the name of his superstition, which is alien to me, and this does not touch on what is sacred to me; but when people with their savage superstition, no matter how many there may be of them, how old their superstition may be, or how powerful they may be,—in the name of that God by whom I live, and of that teaching of Christ which gave me life and may give it to all men,—preach gross sorcery, I cannot look on in peace. And if I call by name what they do, I do only what I must, what I cannot help

doing, if I believe in God and the Christian teaching. But if they call the arraignment of their deception a blasphemy, that only proves the force of their deception, and must only increase the efforts of men who believe in God and in Christ's teaching, in order to destroy this deception, which conceals the true God from men.

Of Christ, who drove the oxen, the sheep, and the money-changers out of the temple, they must have said that He was blaspheming.

If He were to come now and see what is being done in His name in the church, He would with greater and more legitimate anger throw out all those terrible corporales, Eucharist spears, crosses, cups, tapers, images, and all that by means of which they, committing sorceries, conceal God and His teaching from men. So this is what is true and untrue in the Synod's decree concerning me. I really do not believe in what they say they believe. But I believe in much of what they wish to assure people that I do not believe in.

What I believe in is this: I believe in God, whom I understand as Spirit, as Love, as the beginning of everything. I believe that He is in me and I in Him. I believe that God's will is most clearly and comprehensibly expressed in the teaching of the man Christ, whom to understand as God and pray to I consider the greatest blasphemy. I believe that the greatest true good of man is the fulfilment of God's will, but His will is this, that men should love one another and in consequence of this should treat others as they wish that others should treat them, as, indeed, it says in the Gospel that in this is all the law and the prophets. I believe that the meaning of the life of every man is, therefore, only in the augmentation of love in himself; that this augmentation of love leads the individual man in this life to a greater and ever greater good, and gives after death a greater good, the greater the love is in man, and at the same time

more than anything else contributes to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the world, that is, of an order of life with which the now existing discord, deception, and violence will give way to free agreement, truth, and brotherly love of men among themselves. I believe that there is but one means for success in love, and that is prayer, not public prayer in temples, which is directly forbidden by Christ (Matt. vi. 5-13), but such as Christ has given us an example of, — solitary prayer, which consists in the establishment and strengthening in our consciousness of the meaning of our life and our independence of everything except God's will.

Whether these my beliefs offend, pain, or tempt any one, or interfere with anything or any one, or displease any one, — I can change them as little as I can change my body. I have to live myself, die myself (and very soon at that), and so I can absolutely not believe otherwise than I do, while getting ready to go to that God from whom I have come. I do not believe that my faith is unchangeable and incontestably true for all times, but I do not see any other, — one which is more simple and clear, and which answers all the demands of my mind and heart; when I find such a one, I will accept it at once, because God needs nothing but the truth. But I am equally unable to return to that from which I have just come out with such sufferings, as a flying bird can no longer enter into the shell of the egg from which it came out.

"He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all," said Coleridge.

I went the opposite way. I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than peace, then I loved Christianity more than my church, but now I love truth better than anything in the world. And until now truth for me has

coincided with Christianity, as I understand it. And I profess this Christianity; and in the measure in which I profess it, I live calmly and joyously, and calmly and joyously approach death.

*April 4, 1901.*





THE ONLY MEANS

1901



# THE ONLY MEANS

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Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets (Matt. vii. 12).

## 1

THERE are more than one thousand millions of working people in the world. All the bread, all the commodities of this world, everything men live and are rich by, — all that is made by the working people. But the working people live in constant need, ignorance, slavery, and contempt of all those whom they dress, feed, provide for, and serve.

The land is taken away from them and considered to be the property of those who do not work upon it ; thus, to gain his sustenance from it, a labourer must do everything which the owners of the land demand of him. But if the labourer leaves the land and goes to work in factories or plants, he falls into the slavery of the rich, for whom he must all his life work ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a day, doing somebody else's monotonous, tedious, and frequently injurious work. If he manages to provide for himself on the land or in doing somebody else's work, so as to be able to feed himself without suffering want, he will not be left alone, but they will demand of him taxes and, besides, will take him for three, four, or five

years into the army, or will compel him to pay special taxes for military affairs. If he wants to use the land, without paying for it, or if he arranges a strike and wants to keep other labourers from taking his place, or refuses to pay the taxes, they send the army out against him, wound and kill him, and by force compel him to work and to pay taxes as before.

Thus, the working people live throughout the whole world, not like men, but like beasts of burden, who are compelled all their lives to do, not what they need, but what their oppressors want, and for which their oppressors give them precisely as much food, clothing, and rest as they need in order to be able to work without cessation. But that small part of men which lords it over the working people enjoys everything which the masses produce, and lives in idleness and mad luxury, uselessly and immorally wasting the labours of millions.

Thus lives the majority of men in the whole world, not only in Russia, but also in France, in Germany, in England, in China, in India, in Africa, — everywhere. Who is to blame for it? And how can it be mended? Some say that those are to blame who, without working on the land, own it, and that the land ought to be given back to the working people; others say that the rich are to blame, who own the implements of labour, that is, the factories and plants, and that it is necessary that the factories and plants should become the property of the working people; others again say that the whole structure of life is to blame, and that it is necessary to change this whole structure.

Is this true?

## 2

Some five years ago, during the coronation of Nicholas II., the masses in Moscow were promised a free treat of wine, beer, and lunch. The masses moved toward the

place where the food was distributed, and a crush ensued. Those in front were knocked off their feet by those who were behind them, and these, in their turn, were pushed by those still farther back, and all, without seeing what was going on in front, pushed and crushed one another. The feeble were knocked off their feet by those who were stronger, and then the stronger people themselves, jammed in and suffocating, fell and were trampled upon by those who were behind them and could not arrest the motion. Thus several thousand people, old and young, men and women, were crushed to death.

When all was over, people began to reflect as to who was to blame for it. Some said that the police were to blame; others said that the managers were to blame; others again said that the Tsar was to blame, for having invented this stupid kind of a celebration. All, but themselves, were blamed. And yet it would seem clear, only those were to blame who, to be the first to get a handful of cakes and a beaker of wine, rushed forward, without paying any attention to any one else, and pushed and crushed the others.

Does not the same happen with the working people? The working people are worn out, crushed, turned into slaves, only because for the sake of insignificant advantages they themselves ruin their lives and those of their brothers. The working people complain of the landowners, the government, the manufacturers, the army.

But the landowners use the land, the government collects the taxes, the manufacturers dispose of the workmen, and the army suppresses the strikes, only because the working people not only aid the landowners, the government, the manufacturers, the army, but themselves do all that of which they complain. If a landowner is able to use thousands of desyatínas of land, without working it himself, he does so only because the working people for their advantage go and work for him, and serve as his

janitors, outriders, and clerks. In the same way the taxes are collected by the government from the working people, only because the working people, with an eye to a salary, which is collected from them, become elders, tax collectors, policemen, custom-house servants, border guards, that is, aid the government to do what they complain of. Again the working people complain that the manufacturers lower the wages and make the men work longer and ever longer hours; but this, too, is done only because the working people knock down one another's wages and, besides, hire out to the manufacturers as receivers, superintendents, janitors, and chief workmen, and for their masters' advantage search, fine, and in every way oppress their brothers.

Finally the working people complain that the army is sent out against them, when they want to take possession of the land which they consider their own, or do not pay the taxes, or arrange strikes.

But the army consists of soldiers, and the soldiers are the same working people who, some from advantage, others from fear, enter military service and make under oath a promise which is contrary both to their consciences and to the divine law recognized by them, that they will kill all those whom the authorities shall order them to kill.

Thus all the calamities of the working people are caused by themselves.

They need only stop aiding the rich and the government, and all their calamities will be destroyed of themselves.

Why, then, do they continue to do what ruins them?

### 3

Two thousand years ago people began to be acquainted with God's law that it is necessary to do unto others as

one would have others treat us, or, as this is expressed by the Chinese sage Confucius, "Do not do to others what you do not want that others should do to you."

This law is simple and comprehensible to every man, and obviously gives the greatest good accessible to men. And so it would seem that, as soon as men have learned this law, they ought immediately to carry it out to the best of their ability, and ought to use all their forces for the purpose of teaching this law to the younger generations and familiarizing them with its execution.

Thus, it would seem, all people ought to have acted long ago, since this law was almost simultaneously expressed by Confucius, by the Jewish sage Hillel, and by Christ.

Especially the men of our Christian world, it would seem, ought to have acted thus, since they recognize as the chief divine revelation that Gospel in which it says directly that this is the whole law and the prophets, that is, all the teaching which men need.

Meanwhile almost two thousand years have passed, and men, far from executing this law themselves and teaching it to their children, for the most part do not know it themselves, or, if they know it, consider it to be unnecessary or impracticable.

At first this seems strange, but when one considers how people lived before the discovery of this law, and how long they lived thus, and how incompatible this law is with the life of humanity as at present constituted, one begins to understand why this happened so.

This happened so because, while men did not know the law that for the good of all men each ought to do unto another what he wished that others should do to him, each man tried for his advantage to have as much power over other men as possible. Having seized such power, each man, to be able without molestation to enjoy it, was compelled in his turn to submit to those who were

stronger than he, and to aid them. These stronger ones, in their turn, had to submit to those who were still stronger, and to aid them.

Thus, in those societies which did not know the law that we ought to treat others as we wish that others should treat us, a small number of men always ruled all the rest.

And so it is comprehensible that, when this law was revealed to men, the small number of men who ruled the rest not only did not wish to accept this law, but could not even wish that people over whom they ruled should learn of it and accept it.

A small number of ruling people have always known full well that their power is based on this, that those over whom they rule are constantly at war with each other, each trying to make the others submit to him. And so they have always employed all means at their command in order to conceal the existence of this law from their subjects.

They do not conceal this law in that they deny it,—which is, indeed, impossible, since the law is clear and simple,—but in that they put forth hundreds and thousands of other laws, recognizing them as more important and obligatory than the law about doing unto another as one would that others should do to oneself.

Some of these people, the priests, preach hundreds of church dogmas, rites, sacrificial ceremonies, prayers, which have nothing in common with the law about doing unto others as one would that others should do to oneself,—giving them out as the most important laws of God, the non-performance of which leads to eternal perdition.

Others, the rulers, accepting the doctrine invented by the priests and regarding it as the law, on its basis establish governmental decrees which are directly opposed to the law of mutuality, and under the threat of punishment demand that all men shall perform them.



Others again, the learned and the rich, who do not recognize God or any obligatory law of His, teach that there is only science and its laws, which they, the learned, reveal and the rich know, and that, for all people to fare well, it is necessary by means of schools, lectures, theatres, concerts, galleries, assemblies to acquire the same idle life which the learned and the rich live, and that then all that evil from which the working people suffer will come to an end of its own accord.

Neither of these deny the law itself, but side by side with it put forth such a mass of every kind of theological, governmental, and scientific laws, that amidst them that clear and all-accessible law of God, the fulfilment of which indubitably liberates the majority of men from their sufferings, becomes imperceptible and even entirely disappears.

It is this that has produced the remarkable fact that the working people, who are crushed by the governments and by the rich, continue generation after generation to ruin their lives and the lives of their brothers; and, having recourse, for the sake of alleviating their condition, to the most complicated, cunning, and difficult of means, such as prayers, sacrificial ceremonies, the humble execution of governmental demands, unions, savings-banks, assemblies, strikes, revolutions, fail to have recourse to the one means, the fulfilment of the law of God, which certainly frees them from all their calamities.

## 4

“But is it possible that in so simple and short an utterance, as the one that men must act toward others as they wish that others should act to them, is contained the whole law of God and all the guidance of human life?” will say those who are used to the intricacy and

confusion of the theological, governmental, and scientific considerations.

To such people it appears that the law of God and the guidance of human life must be expressed in diffuse, complicated theories, and so cannot be expressed in such a short and simple utterance.

Indeed, the law about doing unto another as we would that others should do to us is very brief and very simple, but it is this very brevity and simplicity that show that this law is true, indubitable, eternal, and good, a law of God, worked out by a millennial life of the whole of humanity, and not the production of one man or of one circle of men, which calls itself the church, the state, or science.

The theological reflections about the fall of the first man, about his redemption, about the second advent, or the governmental and scientific disquisitions about parliaments, supreme power, the theory of punishment, of property, of values, the classification of the sciences, natural selection, and so forth, may be very astute and profound, but are always accessible to but a small number of men. But the law about treating other people as we would that others should treat us is accessible to all men, without distinction of race, faith, culture, or even age.

Besides, the theological, governmental, scientific reflections, which are regarded as the truth in one place and at one time, are regarded as a lie in another place and at another time; but the law about treating others as we would that others should treat us is regarded as true wherever it is known, and never ceases to be the truth for those who have once learned it.

But the chief difference between this law and all other laws, and its chief advantage, is this, that all the theological, governmental, and scientific laws not only do not pacify people and give them the good, but frequently cause the greatest enmity and sufferings.

But the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do to us, or about not doing unto others as we would that others should not do to us, can produce nothing but concord and the good. And so the deductions from this law are infinitely beneficent and varied, defining all possible relations of men among themselves, and everywhere putting concord and mutual service in the place of discord and struggle. If only men, having freed themselves from the deceptions which conceal this law from them, would recognize its obligatoriness and would work out all its applications to life, there would appear that science, now absent, but common to all men and most important in the world, which would show how on the basis of this law are to be settled all conflicts, both of separate individuals among themselves and between separate individuals and society. If this now lacking science were established and worked out, and if all adults and all children were taught it, as now they are taught harmful superstitions and frequently useless and harmful sciences, the whole life of men would be changed, and so would all those grievous conditions in which now the vast majority of them live.

## 5

In the Bible tradition it says that God gave His law to men long before the law about not doing to others what we do not want that others should do to us.

In this law there was the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." This commandment was for its time as significant and as fruitful as the later commandment about doing to others what we would that others should do to us, but to it befell the same as did to this later commandment. It was not directly rejected by men, but, like the later commandment of mutuality, it was lost amidst other rules and precepts, which were recognized as

of equal or even greater importance than the law of the inviolability of human life. If there were but this one commandment, and Moses, according to tradition, had brought down on the tables, as the only law of God, nothing but the few words, "Thou shalt not kill," men ought to have recognized the obligatoriness of fulfilling this law, for which no other obligation could be substituted. And if men had recognized this law as the chief and only law of God, and had carried it out strictly, as they now carry out the celebration of the Sabbath, the worship of the images, communion, the non-eating of pork, and so forth, the whole of the human life would have been changed, and there would be no possibility for war, nor slavery, nor the rich men's seizure of the land of the poor, nor the possession of the products of labour by the many, because all this is based only on the possibility or on the threat of murder.

Thus it would be if the law, "Thou shalt not kill," were recognized as the only law of God. But when, on a par with this law, they recognized as just as important the commandments about the Sabbath, about not pronouncing God's name, and other commandments, there naturally arose, besides, new decrees of the priests, which were recognized as of equal importance, and the one greatest law of God, "Thou shalt not kill," which changed the whole life of men, was drowned among them, and not only did it become not always obligatory, but there were also found cases when it was possible to act quite contrary to it, so that this law has not even to this day received the significance which is proper to it.

The same happened with the law about acting toward others as we would that others should act toward us.

Thus the chief evil from which men suffer has for a long time not consisted in this, that they do not know God's true law, but in this, that men, to whom the knowledge and the execution of the true law is inconvenient,

being unable to destroy or overthrow it, invent "precept upon precept and rule upon rule," as Isaiah says, and give them out as just as obligatory as, or even more obligatory than the true laws of God. And so, the only thing that now is needed for freeing men from their sufferings, is this, that they should free themselves from all the theological, governmental, and scientific reflections, which are proclaimed to be obligatory laws of life, and, having freed themselves, should naturally recognize as more binding upon them than all the other precepts and laws, that true, eternal law, which is already known to them, and gives, not only to a few, but to all men, the greatest possible good in social life.

## 6

"But," will say some, "no matter how correct the law about doing to others what we would that others should do to us may be in itself, it cannot be applied to all cases in life. Let men recognize this law to be always binding, without any exceptions whatever, and they will be compelled to recognize as inadmissible the use of any violence by any set of men upon any other, since no one wants any violence to be used against him. But without the use of violence over some people the individual cannot be made safe, property cannot be protected, the country cannot be defended, the existing order cannot be maintained."

God says to men: "In order that you may everywhere and always be well off, fulfil my law about doing to others what you would that others should do to you."

But men who established a certain order in the year 1901 in England, Germany, France, or Russia say: "Suppose we should fare worse, if we fulfilled the law given to us by God?"

We accept a law which is made by an assembly of

men, no matter how strange it may be and by what bad men it may be made, and we are not afraid to fulfil it; but we are afraid to fulfil the law which is not only in agreement with reason and conscience, but which is also directly expressed in the book which we accept as God's revelation, as though saying: "Suppose something bad should result from it, or that it should lead to disorder."

Is it not obvious that the men who speak and think so are not speaking of order, but of that disorder in which they live and which is advantageous for them?

Order is in their opinion a state in which they are able to feast on other people; but disorder is that state when the people devoured wish that men should stop devouring them.

Such considerations show only that the men who belong to the small number of the ruling class feel, for the most part unconsciously, that the recognition of the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us, and its fulfilment by men, not only destroys their advantageous social position, but also reveals all their immorality and cruelty. These people cannot reflect differently.

But it is time for the working people, who are driven off the land, crushed under taxes, driven to convict labour in factories, changed into slave soldiers, who torture themselves and their brothers, to understand that only the belief in the law of God and its fulfilment will free them from their sufferings.

The non-fulfilment of this law and the ever increasing calamities resulting from it urge them to it. It is time for the labouring people to understand that their salvation lies only in this, that they need but begin to fulfil the law of mutuality, in order that their situation should at once be improved, — and it will be improved in proportion as the number of men who act toward others as they would that others should act toward them shall be increased.

And this is not mere words, not abstract reflections, like the religious, governmental, socialistic, scientific theories, but an actual means of liberation.

The theological, governmental, and scientific reflections and promises afford the good to the working people, some in the world to come, and others in this world, but at such a distant future, that the bones of those who live and suffer now will long ago have rotted; but the fulfilment of the law about doing unto others what we would that others should do unto us immediately and incontestably improves the condition of the working people.

Even if all the working people did not see clearly that by working on the lands of the capitalists and in their factories they give the capitalists the chance of using the products of the labours of their brothers, and thus violate the law of mutuality, or, if they saw it and through want did not have the strength to decline such work, the refraining from such work, even by a few, would embarrass the capitalists and would at once improve the general condition of the working people. And the refraining from a direct participation in the activity of the capitalists and the government in the capacity of overseers, clerks, collectors of taxes, custom-house servants, and so forth, who obviously are opposed to the law of mutuality, would still more improve the condition of the working people, even if not all should be able to abstain from such an activity. And the refusal of the working people to take part in the army, which has murder for its aim, — an act most opposed to the law of mutuality, — and which of late has been more and more frequently directed against the labourers, would absolutely change the position of the working people for the better.

## 7

God's law is not God's law because, as the priests always assert in regard to their laws, it was in a miracu-

lous way enunciated by God himself, but because it faultlessly and obviously points out to men that path which, if they travel upon it, will certainly free them from their sufferings and will give them the greatest internal — spiritual — and external — physical — good, and this will be attained not by a chosen few, but by all men without any exception.

Such is the law of God about treating others as we would that others should treat us. It shows to people that, fulfilling it, they will certainly receive the inner, spiritual good of the consciousness of agreement with the will of God and of the increase of love in themselves and in others, and at the same time in social life the greatest certain good accessible to them; and that, in departing from it, they certainly make their condition worse.

Indeed, it is obvious to every man who does not take part in the struggle of men among themselves, but observes life from without, that the people who struggle among themselves act precisely like gamblers who give up their certain, though insignificant, property for the very doubtful possibility of its increase.

Whether a working man who underbids his companions or who goes to work for the rich or enters military service will improve his condition, is as doubtful as this, whether the gambler will win in putting up his stake.

There can be thousands of casualties by which his condition will remain such as it is, or even get worse than it is. But it is unquestionable that his agreement to work for smaller wages or his readiness to serve the capitalists and the government will make the condition of all the working people, and his with theirs, slightly worse, — and this is as unquestionable as that the gambler will certainly lose the stake which he risks.

For a man who does not take part in the struggle, but observes life, it is obvious that just as in games of hazard, in lotteries, in the exchange, it is only the keepers of the



gambling-houses, of the lotteries, and of the brokers' offices who get rich, while all players get ruined, so also in life it is the governments, the rich, in general the oppressors, who become enriched; but all the working people who, in the hope of improving their situation, depart from the law of mutuality, only make the situation of all working people worse, and consequently their own situation together with the rest.

God's law is God's law even because it defines man's position in the world, showing him that better thing which he can do while in this position, both for his spiritual and for his carnal life.

"Therefore take no thought," it says in the Gospel in explanation of this law, "saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." And these are not mere words, but the explanation of man's true position in the world.

If a man only does what God wants of him, and fulfils His law, God, too, will do for him everything which he needs. Thus the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us refers to God as well. For Him to do to us what we would that He should do to us, we must do for Him what He wants us to do. What He wants us to do is, that we should treat others as we would that others should treat us.

The only difference is this, that what He wants of us He does not need for Himself, but for ourselves, giving us the highest accessible good.

8

The working people must purify themselves, in order that the governments and the rich should stop devouring them.

The itch develops only on a dirty body, and feeds on that body only so long as it is dirty. And so, for the working people to free themselves from their wretchedness, there is but one means,—to purify themselves. But to purify themselves, they must free themselves from the theological, governmental, and scientific superstitions, and believe in God and His law.

In this does the one means of salvation lie.

Take an educated and a simple, unlettered working man. Both are full of indignation against the existing order of things. The educated working man does not believe in God or in His law, but knows Marx and Lassale, and watches the activity of a Bebel or a Jaurès in the parliaments, and delivers fine speeches about the injustice of the seizure of land, the implements of labour, against the hereditary transmission of property, and so forth.

The unlettered working man, though he does not know any theories, and believes in the Trinity, the redemption, and so forth, is also provoked against the landowners and capitalists, and considers the whole existing order to be wrong. But give a working man, either an educated or an uneducated one, the chance of improving his situation by producing some articles cheaper than others, though this may ruin tens, hundreds, thousands of his brothers, or the chance of taking with a rich man a place which gives him a big salary, or of buying land and himself starting an establishment with hired labour, and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand will do so without hesitation, and will often defend their agrarian rights or the rights of the employers with even more zeal than landowners and capitalists who are to the manor born.

But that their participation in murder, that is, in military service or in the taxes which are intended for the support of the army, is not only a morally bad act, but

also very pernicious for their brothers and for themselves, — the same which forms the foundation of their slavery, — does not enter the heads of any of them, and all either gladly pay their taxes for the army, or themselves enter the army, considering such an act to be quite natural.

Could such people have led to the formation of a different society from that which now exists?

The working people find the cause of their condition in the greed and cruelty of the landowners, capitalists, violators; but all, or nearly all, working people, without faith in God and His law, are just such, though much smaller, or unsuccessful, landowners, capitalists, and violators.

A village lad, being in want of earnings, comes to the city, to a peasant of his own village, who is acting as coachman at the house of a rich merchant, and asks the coachman to find a place for him at lower wages than what is customary. The village lad is prepared to take the place; upon arriving the next morning, he accidentally hears in the servants' room the complaints of the old man who has lost his place, and who does not know what to do next. The lad is sorry for the old man, and he refuses the place, because he does not want to do to another man what he does not want that others should do to him. Or a peasant, with a large family, accepts the well-paid place of steward on the estate of a rich and strict landowner. The new steward feels that his family is provided for, and is glad to take the place, but, upon beginning his duties, he has to mulct the peasants for permitting their horses to graze in their master's fields, to catch the women who are collecting fagots in their proprietor's forest, to lower the wages of the labourers and to make them exert their last bit of strength in work. And the steward who has taken this new place feels that his conscience does not permit him to busy himself with

these matters, and he gives up his place, and, in spite of the reproaches and complaints of his family, is left without a place, and does something else, which gives him much less of an income. Or again, a soldier is brought with a company against some rioting labourers and is commanded to shoot at them ; he refuses to obey, and for this suffers cruel torments. All these men act so because the evil which they do to others is visible to them, and their heart tells them outright that what they are doing is contrary to the law of God about not doing to another what we would not that others should do to us. But when the working man knocks down the price of labour and does not see those to whom he does wrong, the evil which he causes his brothers through it is not diminished thereby. And when a working man goes over to the side of the masters, and does not see or feel the harm which he does his own, the harm none the less remains.

The same is true of a man who enters military service and who prepares himself, if necessary, to kill his brothers. If, upon entering military service, he does not yet see whom and how he is going to kill, when he learns to shoot and to stab, he must understand that he will have to kill people some day. And so, for the working people to free themselves from their oppression and slavery, they must educate in themselves a religious feeling, which forbids everything that makes the general position of their brothers worse, even though this deterioration may not be perceptible to them. They must religiously abstain, as now people abstain from eating pork or any other meat on fast-days, from working on Sundays, and so forth, in the first place, from working for capitalists, if they can get along at all without doing so ; in the second place, from offering to do work at less than the established wage ; thirdly, from improving their condition by passing over to the side of the capitalists, by serving them ; and, fourthly, above all else, from participation in govern-

mental violence, — be it police, custom-house, or general military service.

Only by such a religious relation to the form of their activity can the working people be freed from their enslavement.

If a labourer is prepared from advantage or fear to agree to join the organized soldier murderers, without feeling the slightest compunction, if, for the increase of his well-being, he is prepared calmly to deprive his needy brother of his earnings, or for the sake of a salary to go over to the side of the oppressors, by helping them in their activity, — he has no cause for complaint.

No matter what his condition may be, he creates it himself and cannot himself be anything but an oppressed man or an oppressor.

Nor can it be different. So long as a man does not believe in God and His law, he cannot help but desire to get for himself in his short life as much good as possible, independently of what consequences this may have for others. And as soon as all men wish for themselves as much good as possible, independently of what this will do to others, no matter what order may be introduced, all men will form themselves into a cone, at the apex of which will be the rulers, and at the base the oppressed.

## 9

In the Gospel it says that Christ pitied men for being exhausted and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd.

What would He feel and say now, if He saw men not only exhausted and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd, but thousands of millions of men in the whole world, generation after generation, ruining themselves in beastly labour, in stupefaction, ignorance, vices, killing and tormenting one another, in spite of the fact that the

means of freeing oneself from all these calamities was given two thousand years ago?

The key which unlocks the lock of the chain that fetters the working masses is placed near them, and they needs only take the key, open the chain, and be free. But the labouring people have not been doing this; they either undertake nothing and surrender themselves to gloom, or wound their shoulders in tugging at the chain, in the hope of breaking the unbreakable chain, or, what is still worse, like a chained animal which rushes against him who wants to free it, attack those who show them the key which unlocks the lock of their chain.

This key is the belief in God and His law.

Only when men will reject those superstitions in which they are carefully brought up, will believe that the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us is for our time the chief law of God, will believe in this, as they now believe in the celebration of the Sabbath, the observance of fasts, the necessity of divine services and communion, the fivefold prayers, or the fulfilment of the oath, and so forth, and, believing in this, will fulfil this law before any other laws and precepts, — will the slavery and the wretched condition of the working people be destroyed.

And so the working people themselves must first of all, without respect for the old habits and traditions and without fearing the external persecutions from church and state and the internal struggle with their relatives, with boldness and determination free themselves from the false faith in which they are educated, more and more elucidate to themselves and to others, especially to the younger generations and to children, the essence of the faith in God and of the law of mutuality which results from it, and follow it to the best of their ability, though this following may present a temporary discomfiture.

Thus must the working people themselves act.

But the men of the ruling minority, who, making use of the labours of the working people, have acquired all the advantages of culture and so are able clearly to see the deceptions in which they keep the working people, if they truly wish to serve the working people, must first of all with their example and by their words try to free the working people from those religious and governmental deceptions in which they are entrapped, and must not do what they are doing now, when, by leaving in force, supporting, and even strengthening with their example these deceptions, especially the chief, the religious deceptions, they offer ineffective and even injurious medicines, which not only do not free the working people from their wretchedness, but even make their condition worse and worse.

No one can tell, whether this will ever or anywhere be realized. One thing is certain, and that is, that this means can free a vast number of men — all working people — from their humiliations and sufferings.

There is and there can be no other means.

*Yásnaya Polyána, July 12, 1901.*





“THE SOLDIERS’ MEMENTO”

1901



## “THE SOLDIERS’ MEMENTO”

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Fear them not therefore : for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light : and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. x. 26-28).

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts v. 29).

You are a soldier, you have been taught to shoot, stab, march, go through gymnastic exercises, read books, and have been taken out to military exercises and parades ; maybe you went through a war, fighting the Turks or the Chinese, doing everything you were commanded to do. It did not even occur to you to ask yourself whether what you were doing was good or bad.

But here the command is given to your company or squadron to start out, taking along ball-cartridges. You travel or march, without asking whither you are taken.

You are led up to a village or factory, and you see from afar that in the open square there is a crowd of villagers or factory hands, men, women with their children, old men and women. The governor and the prosecutor, accompanied by policemen, walk up to the crowd and talk to the people about something. The crowd is at first silent, then the people begin to cry out louder and louder, and the officials go away from the crowd. You see that

these are peasants or factory hands who are riotous, and that you are brought there to pacify them. The officials several times walk up to the people and walk away again, but the shouts grow louder and louder, and the officials talk among themselves, and you are commanded to load your gun with a ball-cartridge. You see before yourself people, the same from among whom you were taken: men in sleeveless coats, short fur coats, bast shoes, and women in kerchiefs and waists, just such women as your wife or mother.

The first shot you are ordered to fire above the heads of the crowd; but the people do not disperse, and shout louder than before. Then you are commanded to shoot right, not over their heads, but straight into the crowd.

You have been impressed with the idea that you are not responsible for what will happen from your shot; but you know that the man who, weltering in blood, fell down from your shot was killed by you and by no one else, and you know that you might not have shot, and then the man would not have been killed.

What are you to do?

It is not enough for you to drop your gun and refuse just now to shoot at your brothers. To-morrow the same may be repeated, and so, whether you wish it or not, you must bethink yourself and ask yourself what this calling of a soldier is, which has brought you to such a state that you are compelled to shoot at your own unarmed brothers.

In the Gospel it says that we must not only not kill our brothers, but must also not do what leads to murder, that we must not be angry with our brother, and that we must not hate our enemies, but love them.

In the law of Moses it says distinctly, “Thou shalt not kill,” without any explanations as to who may be killed and who not. But in the rules which you have been taught it says that a soldier must fulfil any command of

his superior, no matter what it may be, except a command against the Tsar, and in the explanation of the sixth commandment it says that, though the commandment forbids killing, he who kills in war does not sin against this commandment.<sup>1</sup> But in the *Soldiers' Memento*, which hangs in every barrack and which you have read and heard many a time, it says that a soldier must kill men: "Three fly at you,—the first you stab, the second you shoot, the third you settle with the bayonet . . . if the bayonet is broken, beat with the butt; if the butt won't do, belabour him with your fists; if your fists give out, hang to him with your teeth."<sup>2</sup>

You are told that you must kill, because you have taken the oath, and that the authorities, and not you, will be responsible for your acts.

But before you swore, that is, promised people to do their will, you were even without an oath obliged in everything to do the will of God, of Him who gave you life,—but God has commanded us not to kill.

Thus you could not swear that you would do *everything* demanded of you by men. For this reason it says directly in the Gospel (Matt. v. 34), "Swear not at all" . . . "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." And the same is said in James v. 12: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth," etc. Thus the oath itself is a sin. And what they say to the effect that not you, but the authorities,

<sup>1</sup> In the Rules it says: "By the sixth commandment God forbids us to take the lives of men by violence or cunning, or in any way to violate the security and peace of our neighbour, and so by this commandment quarrels, anger, hatred, envy, and cruelty are also forbidden. But he who kills the enemy in war does not sin against this commandment, because by war he defends our faith, our Tsar, and our country."—*Author's Note*.

<sup>2</sup> *Soldiers' Memento*, collected by Dragomirov, 19th ed., St. Petersburg, 1899.

will be responsible for your acts is an untruth. Can your conscience be, not in yourself, but in the corporal, sergeant, captain, colonel, or anybody else? Nobody can decide for you what you can and must do, and what you cannot and must not do. A man is always responsible for what he does. Is not the sin of adultery many times lighter than the sin of murder, and can a man say to another, "Commit adultery, I take your sin upon myself, because I am your superior"?

Adam, so the Bible tells, sinned against God and then said that his wife had told him to eat the apple, that the devil had tempted her. God justified neither Adam nor Eve, and told them that Adam would be punished for having listened to the voice of his wife, and that his wife would be likewise punished for having obeyed the serpent. He did not free them, but punished them. Will not God say the same to you, when you kill a man and say that your captain commanded you to do so?

The deception is seen even in this, that in the rule which says that a soldier must fulfil all the commandments of his superiors, the words are added: "Except such as are to the harm of the Tsar."

If a soldier, before fulfilling the commands of his superior, must decide whether they are not against the Tsar, how much more must he, before fulfilling the command of his superior, consider whether what his officer demands of him is not against the highest Tsar, God! But there is no act which is more opposed to God's will than the killing of men. And so it is not right to obey men, if they command you to kill men. But if you obey and kill, you do so only for your advantage, in order not to be punished. Thus, by killing by the command of your superiors, you are as much a murderer as that robber who kills a merchant, in order to rob him. The robber is tempted by the money, and you are tempted by the

desire not to be punished and to receive a reward. A man always himself answers for his acts before God.

No power can, as the authorities want it to, make of you, of a living man, a dead thing which may be handled as desired. Christ taught men that they are all sons of God, and so a Christian cannot give his conscience into the power of another man, no matter by what title he may be called, — king, Tsar, or emperor. The fact that the men who have taken the command over you demand of you that you shall kill your brothers, proves only that these men are cheats and that, therefore, you must not obey them. Shameful is the position of the harlot who is always prepared to have her body defiled by him who is pointed out to her by her master; but more shameful is the position of the soldier who is always prepared to commit the greatest crime, — to murder any man who is pointed out to him by his superior.

And so, if you really want to act in godly fashion, you must do this: you must give up the disgraceful and godless calling of a soldier and be prepared to bear all the sufferings which they will impose upon you for this.

Thus the real memento of a Christian soldier is not the one in which it says that “God is the soldiers’ general,” and other blasphemies, and that “a soldier must, while obeying his superiors in everything, be prepared to kill strangers or friends, even his unarmed brothers;” he must remember the words of Scripture that God must be obeyed more than men, and he must not fear those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.<sup>1</sup>

In this consists the true soldiers’ memento, which does not deceive.

*Gáspra, December 7, 1901.*

<sup>1</sup> In Dragomírov’s *Memento* three passages are adduced from the Gospel, — John xv., Matt. x. 22, and 39. From John, verse 13 is quoted: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” apparently in this sense, that the soldiers

must in a battle fight most desperately, in order to defend their comrades.

But these words in no way refer to military matters, but have the very opposite meaning. In verses 10-13 it says: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Thus the words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," do not at all mean that a soldier must defend his comrades, but that a Christian must be prepared to lay down his life for the fulfilment of Christ's commandments about this, that men should love one another, and so must be prepared to sacrifice his life, rather than to kill men.

From Matthew, the end of verse 22 of Chap. X. is quoted, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved," apparently in this sense, that a soldier who will fight bravely will be saved from the enemy. Again the meaning of this passage is the very opposite of the one which the author wants to give to it.

The whole verse runs as follows: "And ye shall be hated by all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Thus it is obvious that this verse cannot have reference to the soldiers: the soldiers are not hated by any one in the name of Christ, and so it is clear that only those men who decline in the name of Christ to do what the world demands of them are those who are hated in the name of Christ, and in the present case these are the soldiers who do not obey, when they are commanded to kill.

Again there is quoted the end of Matt. x. 39, "He that loseth his life shall find it," again in this sense, that he who shall be killed in war will receive his reward in heaven. But the meaning is obviously not that. In verse 38 it says, "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." And only after that is added, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," that is, that he who for the sake of fulfilling the teaching of love shall save his carnal life, will lose his true life, while he who, for the sake of fulfilling the teaching, does not save his carnal life, will attain the true, spiritual, everlasting life.

And so the three passages do not say, as the author wants them to, that, in obeying the authorities, it is necessary to fight, beat, and chew men, but, on the contrary, all three passages, like the Gospel in general, say one and the same thing, that a Christian cannot be a murderer and, therefore, a soldier. And so the words, "A soldier is Christ's warrior," placed in the *Memento* after the Gospel verses, do not mean at all what the author thinks. Indeed, a soldier, if he is a Christian, can and must be Christ's warrior, but he will be Christ's warrior, not when, obeying the will of his superiors, who have pre-



pared him for murder, he shall kill unarmed men, but only when in the name of Christ he will refuse to follow the godless and disgraceful calling of a soldier. And he will war, not upon foreign enemies, but upon his superiors who are deceiving him and his brothers, and he will not fight with the bayonet, or with fist, or teeth, but will in humble reasonableness and readiness prefer to suffer all kinds of sufferings and even death, rather than remain a soldier, that is, a man who is prepared to kill those who are pointed out to him by his superiors. — *Author's Note.*



“THE OFFICERS’ MEMENTO”

1901



## “THE OFFICERS’ MEMENTO”

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But, whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh! (Matt. xviii. 6, 7.)

IN all soldier quarters there hangs upon the wall a so-called *Soldiers’ Memento*, composed by General Dragomírov. This *Memento* is a conglomeration of stupid, slangy, supposedly popular words (though they are quite foreign to any soldier), mixed with blasphemous quotations from the Gospel. Gospel sayings are adduced in confirmation of the statement that the soldiers must kill and chew their enemies: “If the bayonet is broken, fight with your fists; if your fists give out, hang on with your teeth.” At the end of the *Memento* it says that God is the soldiers’ general.

Nothing proves more conclusively than this *Memento* to what a terrible degree of ignorance, slavish obedience, and bestiality our Russians have come. Ever since this most terrible blasphemy has made its appearance and was hung up in all the barracks,—and this was done very long ago,—not one chief, not one priest, who, one would think, would directly be affected by the distortion of the meaning of the Gospel texts, has expressed his condemnation of this disgusting production, and it con-

tinues to be printed in millions of copies and to be read by millions of soldiers, who accept this terrible work as a guide in their activity.

This *Memento* long ago roused my indignation, and now, fearing that I shall not be able to do so again before my death, I have written an address to the soldiers, in which I try to remind them that, as men and Christians, they have quite different obligations before God than those which are put forth in this *Memento*. Such a reminder, I think, is not only necessary for the soldiers, but to an even greater degree for the officerdom (by officerdom I mean all the military authorities, from the ensign to the general), which enters military service or remains in it, not from compulsion, like the soldiers, but from choice. This reminder, it seems to me, is particularly needed in our time.

It was all very well one hundred or fifty years ago, when war was considered to be an inevitable condition of the life of nations, when the men belonging to the nation with which war was waged were considered barbarians, infidels, or malefactors, and when it did not even occur to the military that they would be needed for the suppression and pacification of their own nations, — it was all very well then for a man to put on a bright-coloured, lace-covered uniform, to walk, causing the sabre to rattle and the spurs to tinkle, or to let his horse go through evolutions in front of the regiment, imagining that he was a hero who, if he had not yet sacrificed, was prepared to sacrifice his life in the defence of his country. But now, when the frequent international relations — mercantile, social, scientific, artistic — have so brought the nations together that any war among the modern nations presents itself in the form of a family dissension which violates the most sacred ties of men; when hundreds of peace societies and thousands of articles, not only in special periodicals, but also in the general newspapers, never cease

in every manner possible to make clear the madness of militarism and the possibility, even the necessity, of abolishing war; when, and this is the most important thing of all, the military have more and more frequently to proceed, not against a foreign enemy, in order to defend the country against attacking conquerors or to increase the country’s glory and power, but against unarmed factory hands and peasants,—the galloping on a steed, in a lace-bedecked uniform, and the dandyish appearance in front of the company no longer is a case of trifling, pardonable ambition, which it used to be formerly, but something quite different.

In olden times, say in the days of Nicholas I., it never as much as occurred to any one that the armies were needed preëminently for the purpose of shooting unarmed citizens. But now troops are regularly quartered in the capitals and manufacturing centres, so as to be ready to disperse working men, and hardly a month passes but that the troops are taken out of their barracks with their ball-cartridges and are located in a protected place, ready at any moment to shoot at the masses.

The use of the army against the masses has not only become a customary phenomenon, but the troops are in advance formed in such a way as to be ready for such emergencies. The government does not conceal the fact that the distribution of recruits according to districts is intentionally made in such a way that the soldiers are never drafted from the localities where they are quartered. This is done so as to avoid the necessity of having the soldiers shoot at their own parents.

The Emperor of Germany has said plainly at every levy of recruits (his speech of May 23, 1901) that the soldiers swearing allegiance to him belong to him, body and soul, and that they have but one enemy, and that is, his enemy, and that his enemies are the socialists (that is; the working people), whom the soldiers must, if com-

manded, shoot down (“*niederschliessen*”), even though these be their own brothers or even parents.

Besides, if in former times the troops were used against the masses, those against whom they were used were, or at least were supposed to be, malefactors, ready to ruin and kill peaceful citizens, who, therefore, had to be destroyed for the common good. But now everybody knows that those against whom the troops are sent out are for the most part peaceable, industrious people, who merely desire without interference to enjoy the fruits of their labours. Thus the chief and constant use of troops in our time no longer consists in an imaginary defence against infidel and in general foreign enemies, nor against riotous malefactors, domestic enemies, but in killing their unarmed brothers, who are not all malefactors, but peaceable, industrious people, who only do not wish to have what they earn taken away from them. Thus military service in our time, when its chief purpose is by the threat of killing and by murder itself to retain the enslaved people in those unjust conditions in which they are, is no longer a noble, but a despicable business.

And so it is necessary for the officers who are now serving to think about whom they are serving, and to ask themselves whether what they are doing is good or bad.

I know there are many officers, especially among the higher ranks, who by all kinds of reflections on the subject of Orthodoxy, autocracy, integrity of the state, the inevitableness of imminent war, the need of order, the senselessness of the socialistic ravings, and so forth, try to prove to themselves that their activity is rational and useful, and has nothing immoral about it. But in the depth of their hearts they themselves do not believe in what they say, and the more sensible and the older they are, the less do they believe in it.

I remember how pleasantly I was surprised by my



friend and comrade in the service, a very ambitious man, who had devoted all his life to military service and had attained the highest ranks and distinctions (he was an adjutant-general and a general of artillery), when he told me that he had burned his memoirs on the wars in which he had taken part, because he had changed his view on military matters and now considered every war a bad business, which ought not to be encouraged by busying oneself with it, but, on the contrary, ought in every way possible to be discredited. Many officers believe the same thing, though they do not say so, while they serve. In fact, no thinking officer can think differently. We need but think what, beginning with the lowest ranks and ending with the highest, that of a commander of a corps, constitutes the occupation of all the officers. From the beginning to the end of their service, — I am speaking of the officers in active service, — their activity, with the exception of rare, short periods, when they go to war and are busy with murder, consists in the attainment of two ends, — in instructing the soldiers in the best possible way to kill men and in teaching them such obedience that they will be able mechanically, without any reflection, to do what their chief may demand of them. In olden times they used to say, “flog two unmercifully and get one well instructed,” and so they did. If now the percentage of flogged is less, the principle remains the same. People cannot be brought to that animal and even mechanical condition, when they will do what is most repugnant to their natures and the faith professed by them, namely, murder, at the command of any superior, unless not only cunning deception but even most cruel violence has been practised against them. And so it is done.

Lately a great sensation was created in the French press by the disclosure of some journalists as to the terrible tortures practised on the soldiers of the disciplinary

battalions in the island of Oubrou, within six hours' travel from Paris. The persons punished had their arms and legs tied together behind their backs and were thrown on the floor, screws were put on the thumbs of the hands, which were bent behind their backs, and these screws were so tightened that every motion produced excruciating pain, men were suspended by their legs, and so forth.

When we see trained animals performing what is contrary to their natures, — dogs walking on their fore legs, elephants whirling barrels, tigers playing with lions, and so forth, — we know that all this has been obtained by tortures, by means of hunger, the whip, and the hot iron. We know the same when we see men, in uniforms and with their guns, stand stark still, or go through the same motion with absolute regularity, run, jump, shoot, shout, and so forth, in general execute those beautiful parades and manœuvres, which the emperors and kings admire so much and brag of to one another. It is impossible to drive everything human out of a man and to bring him to the condition of a machine, without torturing him, not in a simple way, but in the most refined and cruel manner, both torturing and deceiving him.

All this you officers do. In this, with the rare exceptions when you go to war, does your service, from the highest to the lowest ranks, consist.

To you comes a youth who is taken away from his family and is settled at the opposite end of the world, and who is impressed with the idea that the deceptive oath, forbidden by the Gospel, which he has taken, binds him irretrievably, just as a cock placed on the floor, on which a chalk-line is drawn from his beak, imagines that he is tied with this line. He comes to you with full humility and with the hope that you, the elders, who are wiser and more learned than he, will teach him everything that is good. But you, instead of freeing him from those super-

stitutions which he has brought with him, inoculate in him new, most senseless, coarse, and harmful superstitions: about the sacredness of the flag, the almost divine significance of the Tsar, the duty of submitting without a murmur to the authorities. When, with the aid of methods worked out in your business for the stultification of men, you bring him to a condition worse than that of an animal, in which he is ready to kill anybody he is commanded to kill, even his unarmed brothers, you proudly show him to the higher power and receive thanks and rewards for this. It is terrible for a man to be a murderer himself, but by means of cunning and cruel methods to bring to this his brothers who confide in him is a most terrible crime. And this you are committing, and in this does your service consist.

So it is not surprising that among you, more than in any other circle, flourish all those things which can drown conscience, — smoking, cards, drunkenness, debauchery, — and that more frequently than anywhere else occur suicides.

“It must be that offences come into the world; but woe to them by whom the offences come.”

You frequently say that you serve, because, if you did not serve, the existing order would be impaired and there would be disorder and all kinds of calamities.

But, in the first place, it is not true that you are concerned about the maintenance of the existing order: you are only concerned about your personal advantage.

In the second place, even if your refraining from doing military service should impair the existing order, this would not at all prove that you must continue to do what is bad, but only that the order which will be destroyed through your abstinence ought to be destroyed. Even if there existed the most useful institutions, such as hospitals, schools, homes for the aged, which would be maintained from the revenue derived from houses of pros-

titution, all the usefulness of these charitable institutions could not keep in her condition a woman who should wish to free herself from her disgraceful calling.

"It is not my fault," the woman would say, "that you have established your charitable institutions on debauchery. I do not want to be a harlot, and with your institutions I have nothing to do." The same ought to be said by every military man, when he is told of the necessity of maintaining the existing order, which is based on the readiness to commit murder. "Establish a general order, such that murder will not be necessary for it," is what a military man should say, "and I will not violate it. I simply do not want to be a murderer."

Many others of you say : "I was educated that way, I am fettered by my position, and I cannot get out of it." But even that is not true.

You can always get out of your position. If you do not, it is because you prefer to live and act against your conscience, rather than lose some of the worldly advantages which you derive from your dishonourable calling. Only forget that you are officers and remember that you are men, and the way out from your condition will at once present itself to you. This way out, the best and most honourable, consists in this, that you call together the part which you command, step to the front, beg the soldiers' pardon for the wrong which you have done them by deceiving them, and stop being a military man. This act seems very bold and seems to call for much courage ; and yet, much less courage is needed in this act than in storming a fort or challenging to a duel for an insult to your uniform,—what you are always ready to do and always do in your capacity as a military man.

But even if you are not able to act in this manner, you are still able, if you have come to understand the criminality of military service, to leave that service and prefer

any other activity to it, even though it be less advantageous.

But if you are not able to do even that, the solution of the question as to whether you will continue to serve will be put off for you until the time — and this time will soon arrive for everybody — when you shall stand face to face with an unarmed crowd of peasants or factory hands, and you shall be commanded to shoot at them. And then if any human feeling is left in you, you will be compelled to refuse to obey and in consequence of this will certainly leave the service.

I know there are many officers still, from the highest to the lowest ranks, who are so ignorant or so hypnotized that they do not see the necessity of any of these three conclusions, and calmly continue to serve and under the present conditions are prepared to shoot at their brothers and are even proud of the fact; fortunately, public opinion more and more punishes these men with contempt and loathing, and their number is growing less and less.

Thus in our time, when the fratricidal purpose of the army has become obvious, it is impossible for the officers to continue the ancient traditions of the military self-satisfied bravado; they cannot even, without recognizing their human degradation and shame, continue the criminal business of teaching simple people who have faith in them how to commit murder, and themselves be ready to take part in the murder of unarmed men.

It is this that every thinking and conscientious officer of our time should understand and remember.

*Gáspra, December 7, 1901.*



INTRODUCTION TO W. VON  
POLENZ'S "DER BÜTTNER-  
BAUER"

1902





## INTRODUCTION TO W. VON POLENZ'S "DER BÜTTNER- BAUER"

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LAST year an acquaintance of mine, in whose taste I have confidence, gave me a German novel, Von Polenz's *Der Büttnerbauer*, to read. I read it, and I was surprised to find that this production, which appeared about two years ago, was almost unknown to people.

This novel is not one of those imitations of artistic productions which are in our time produced in such enormous quantities, but a real artistic production. This novel does not belong to those descriptions of events and persons, which present no interest whatever and which are artificially connected among themselves for no other reason than that the author, having learned how to handle the technique of artistic descriptions, wishes to write a new novel; nor to those dissertations on a given theme, which, clothed in the form of a drama or a novel, also pass in our time among the reading public for artistic productions; nor to those productions, called decadent, which particularly please the modern public for the very reason that, resembling the raving of a maniac, they are something of the nature of rebuses, the guessing of which forms a pleasant occupation and at the same time is considered to be a sign of refinement.

This novel does not belong to any of these, but is a really artistic production, in which the author tells what he must tell, because he loves that of which he tells, and does not speak with reflections, with hazy allegories, but by the simple means with which artistic contents can be rendered, by poetic pictures, — not fantastic, unusual, incomprehensible pictures, which are united without any inner necessity, but by the representation of the most ordinary, simple persons and events, which are united among themselves by an inner artistic necessity.

This novel is not merely a real artistic production; it is also a beautiful artistic production, uniting in the highest degree all the three important conditions of a really good production of art.

In the first place, its contents are important, in that they deal with the life of the peasantry, that is, the majority of men, who stand at the basis of every social structure and who in our time are passing, not only in Germany, but also in all the other European countries, through a grave change of their ancient structure of centuries. (It is remarkable that almost simultaneously with the *Büttnerbauer* there has appeared a French novel, René Bazin's *La Terre Qui Meurt*, which deals with the same subject; it is quite good, though less artistic than the *Büttnerbauer*.)

In the second place, this novel is written with great mastery, in a beautiful German, which is particularly powerful, when the author makes his characters speak in the coarse, manly Plattdeutsch of the labouring classes.

And, in the third place, this novel is all permeated with love for those men whom the author lets act.

In one of the chapters, for example, we have a description of a man who, after a night passed in drunkenness with his companions, early in the morning returns home and knocks at the door. His wife looks out of the window and recognizes him; she showers him with curses and is

intentionally slow in letting him in. When, at last, she opens the door for him, he rolls into the house and wants to go to the large living-room, but his wife does not allow him to go there, lest the children should see their drunken father, and she pushes him back. But he takes hold of the door-posts, and struggles with her. Though he is usually a peaceable man, he now suddenly gets irritated (the cause of the irritation is this, that on the previous day she took the money given to him by some gentlemen out of his pocket and hid it), and in his madness throws himself upon her and, seizing her by her hair, demands his money.

"I will not give it to you, never!" she replies to his demands, trying to free herself from him.

"I'll die, but I won't give it to you!" she says.

"You will!" he yells, knocking her off her feet. He falls upon her, and continues to demand his money. Receiving no answer, he in his drunken fit of anger wants to strangle her. But the sight of blood which runs down her brow and nose from underneath her hair arrests him: he feels terribly at what he has done, and he stops beating her and, tottering, reaches his bed, where he falls down.

The scene is true and terrible. But the author loves his heroes and adds one small detail, which suddenly illumines everything with such a bright ray of light that he makes the reader not only pity, but even love these men, in spite of all their coarseness and cruelty. The beaten wife comes to her senses, gets up from the floor, wipes her bloody head with the lower part of her skirt, feels her limbs, and, opening the door to the room in which are her crying children, quiets them, and then seeks her husband with her eyes. He is lying on his bed just as he fell down upon it, but his head is hanging down from the head of the bed and is filling with blood. His wife walks over to him, carefully raises his head, and puts it

on the pillow, and only then adjusts her clothes and detaches a handful of hair which has been pulled out.

Dozens of pages of discussions will not tell everything that is told by this detail. Here the consciousness, educated by tradition, of conjugal duty, and the triumph of the set determination not to give up the money, which not she, but the family needs, are at once revealed to the reader; here also we have the offence, and the forgiveness for the beating, and pity, and, if not love, at least the recollection of the love for the husband, the father of her children. But that is not all. Such a detail, by throwing a light on the inner life of this woman and this man, at the same time illuminates for the reader the inner life of millions of such husbands and wives, of those who have lived before and who live now; it not only inspires respect and love for these people who are crushed by work, but also makes us stop and wonder why it is that these physically and spiritually strong people, with such possibilities of a good life of love, are so neglected, so crushed, and so ignorant.

Such truly artistic features, which are revealed only through the love of the author for what he writes about, may be found in every chapter of the novel.

This novel is unquestionably a beautiful production of art, as all those who read it will agree. And yet this novel appeared three years ago, and, though it was translated in Russia in the *Messenger of Europe*, it has passed unnoticed, both in Russia and in Germany. I have lately asked several literary Germans whom I have met about this novel,—they had heard Polenz's name, but had not read his novel, though they had all read Zola's last novels, and Kipling's stories, and Ibsen's dramas, and D'Annunzio, and even Maeterlinck.

About twenty years ago Matthew Arnold wrote a beautiful article on the purpose of criticism. According to his opinion, it is the purpose of criticism to find what

is most important and good in any book whatever, wherever and whenever written, and to direct the reader's attention to what is important and good in them.

Such a criticism not only seems to me indispensable in our time, when people are deluged with newspapers, periodicals, and books, and when advertising has been so widely developed, but on whether such criticism will make its appearance and will gain authority does the whole future of the enlightenment of the whole cultured class of our European world depend.

The overproduction of any article is harmful; but the overproduction of articles which do not form an end, but a means, when people regard this means as an end, is particularly harmful.

Horses and carriages, as means of transportation, garments and houses, as means of protection against the changes of weather, good food, as a means for the preservation of the strength of the organism, are very useful. But the moment men begin to look upon possession of the means as an end, considering it good to have as many horses, houses, garments, and articles of food as possible, these articles become, not only useless, but absolutely harmful. This fate befell printing also in the well-to-do circle of men of our European society. Printing, which is unquestionably useful for the vast masses of the little educated, has in the midst of the well-to-do people for a long time served as the chief instrument for the diffusion of ignorance, and not of enlightenment.

It is very easy to become convinced of this. Books, periodicals, especially the newspapers, have in our time become great financial undertakings, for the success of which the largest possible number of purchasers are needed. Now the interests and tastes of the largest possible number of purchasers are always low and vulgar, and so, for the success of the productions of the press, it is necessary that the productions should respond to the

demands of the great majority of the purchasers, that is, that they should touch upon the low interests and correspond to the vulgar tastes. The press fully satisfies these demands, which it is quite able to do, since among the number of workers for the press there are many more people with the same low interests and vulgar tastes as the public, than men with high interests and a refined taste. And since, with the diffusion of printing and the commercial methods used with periodicals, newspapers, and books, these people receive good pay for their productions, which supply the demands of the masses, there results that terrible, ever growing and growing deluge of printed paper, which by its mass alone, to say nothing of the harm of its contents, forms a vast obstacle to enlightenment.

If in our time a bright man from among the masses, who wants to educate himself, have access to all books, periodicals, and newspapers, and be allowed to choose his own reading, all the chances are that in the course of ten years, reading assiduously every day, he will be reading nothing but foolish and immoral books. It is as unlikely that he will strike a good book as it would be to find a marked pea in a bushel of peas. The worst thing about it is this, that reading nothing but poor works, he will more and more corrupt his understanding and taste. Thus, if he does strike upon some good work, he will either not understand it at all or will understand it perversely.

Besides, thanks to accident or to masterly advertising, certain poor productions, like Hall Caine's *The Christian*, a novel which is false in contents and not at all artistic, and of which a million copies were sold, obtain, like Odol and Pear's Soap, great popularity, which is not justified by their merits. This great popularity makes an ever increasing number of men read these books, and the fame of an insignificant and frequently harmful

book keeps growing and growing like a snowball, and in the heads of the vast majority of men, again like a snowball, there is formed a greater and ever greater confusion of ideas, and an absolute inability to comprehend the value of literary productions. And so, in proportion as the newspapers, periodicals, and books — printing in general — become more and more disseminated, the level of the value of what is printed falls lower and lower, and the great mass of the so-called cultured public sinks more and more into a most hopeless, self-satisfied, and, so, incorrigible ignorance.

Within my memory, in the period of fifty years, there has taken place this striking lowering of the taste and common sense of the reading public. This lowering may be followed out in all the branches of literature, but I will point out only the most perceptible examples, as known to me. In Russian poetry, for example, after Púshkin and Lérmontov (Tyútchev is generally forgotten), the poetic fame passes at first to the doubtful poets Máykov, Polónski, Fet, then to Nekrásov, who is entirely devoid of the poetic gift, then to the artificial and prosaic versifier Alekseyéy Tolstóy, then to the monotonous, weak Nádsen, then to the absolutely untalented Apúkhtin, then everything becomes mixed, and there appear versifiers, and their name is legion, who do not even know what poetry is or what that which they write means or why they write.

Another striking example is that of the English prose writers: from the great Dickens we descend, at first, to George Eliot, then to Thackeray, from Thackeray to Trollope, and then begins the indifferent manufactures of a Kipling, Hall Caine, Rider Haggard, and so forth. Still more striking is this in American literature: after the great galaxy, — Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Whittier, and others, suddenly everything breaks off, and there appear beautiful editions with beautiful illustrations and with

beautiful stories, and novels, which it is impossible to read on account of the absence of any and all contents.

In our time the ignorance of the cultured crowd has reached such a pass that all the really great thinkers, poets, prose writers, both of antiquity and of the nineteenth century, are considered obsolete, and no longer satisfy the high and refined demands of the new men; all that they look upon either with contempt or with a condescending smile. As the last word of philosophy is in our time regarded the immoral, coarse, inflated, disconnected babbling of Nietzsche; the senseless, artificial conglomeration of words of all kinds of decadent poems, which are held together by rhyme and measure, are regarded as poetry of the highest calibre; in all the theatres they give dramas, the meaning of which is not known to any one, not even to the author, and novels which have no contents and no artistic merit are printed in editions of a million copies and are distributed under the guise of artistic productions.

"What shall I read, in order to complete my education?" asks a young man or girl, who has finished at a higher institution of learning.

The same is asked by a literate man from the masses, who can understand what he reads and who is searching after real enlightenment.

To answer such questions it is naturally not sufficient to make a naïve attempt at interrogating prominent men as to what books they consider to be the best.

Nor is one aided by the subdivision of writers into classes, tacitly accepted by European society, of the first, second, third, fourth order, and so forth,—of geniuses, very talented, talented, and simply good writers. Such a subdivision does not help us in a true comprehension of the merits of literature and in the discovery of what is good amidst a sea of what is bad, and even bothers us in it. To say nothing of the fact that such a division into



classes is very frequently incorrect and maintains itself only because it was made long ago and is accepted by all, such a division is harmful, because very mediocre things will be found among the authors considered first class, while most excellent things may be found in the authors of the last division. Thus a man who will believe in the division of the authors into classes, and that in a first-class author everything is beautiful, and in the authors of a lower class or in those who are entirely unknown everything is weak, will only get mixed up in his comprehension and will lose much which is truly useful and truly enlightening.

Nothing but the true criticism can answer the most important question of our time of the youth of the cultured class, in search of culture, or of the men of the masses, in search of enlightenment. Not the criticism which now exists and which sets itself the task of lauding productions that have gained popularity and of discovering justificatory or hazy philosophico-aesthetic theories for these productions; nor the criticism which busies itself with more or less wittily ridiculing poor productions or the works from a hostile camp, and still less the criticism which has flourished in our country and which sets itself the task from the types represented in a few authors to determine the direction of the motion of all society, or in general, *à propos* of the literary productions, to express their economic and political ideas.

The answer to this vastly important question as to what we shall read out of the mass that is written can be given only by the true criticism, the one which, as Matthew Arnold says, will make it its aim to bring to the front and point out to men everything which is best, both in past and in present writers.

On this, whether such a criticism will appear or not, an unselfish criticism, belonging to no party, understanding and loving art, and whether its authority will be

established with sufficient firmness to overcome the financial advertisements, does in my opinion depend the solution of the question as to whether the last rays of enlightenment in our so-called cultured European society will perish, without extending to the masses, or whether the enlightenment will be regenerated, as it was regenerated in the Middle Ages, and whether it will extend to the majority of the masses, who now are deprived of all enlightenment.

The ignorance of the public as to the beautiful novel of Polenz, as well as to many other good productions, which are drowned in a sea of printed trash, while senseless, trifling, and simply nasty productions of literature are discussed on all sides, invariably praised and disseminated in millions of copies, has evoked these thoughts in me, and I seize upon the opportunity, which will hardly present itself again to me, to express them, if only briefly.

# ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

1902



# ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

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## 1

IN Russia there exist missionaries whose duty it is to convert all the non-Orthodox to Orthodoxy.

Toward the end of 1901 a congress of these missionaries assembled in the city of Orel, and at the end of this congress the government marshal of nobility, Mr. Stakhovich, delivered a speech in which he proposed to the congress to recognize full liberty of conscience, meaning by these words, as he expressed it, not only liberty of belief, but also liberty of profession of faith, which includes the liberty of defection from Orthodoxy and even converting people to faiths not in agreement with Orthodoxy. Mr. Stakhovich assumed that such a liberty could only contribute to the triumph and dissemination of Orthodoxy, of which he recognized himself as being a believing professor.

The members of the congress did not agree to Mr. Stakhovich's proposition and did not even discuss it. Later on there began a lively exchange of ideas and a discussion as to whether the Christian church should be tolerant or not: some, the majority of the Orthodox, both clerical and lay, expressed themselves in newspapers and periodicals against toleration, and, for one reason or another, recognized the impossibility of stopping the persecutions against the dissenting members of the church; others, the minority, agreed with Stakhovich's opinion, approved of it, and argued the desirability and even the

necessity for the church of recognizing liberty of conscience.

Those who dissented from Mr. Stakhóvich's opinion said that the church, which gave the everlasting good to men, could not fail to use all the means at its command for the salvation of its unreasoning members from eternal perdition, and that one of these means were the barriers set by the temporal power against defection from the true church and the conversion of its members. Above all things, they said, the church, which received from God the power to bind and loose, always knows what it is doing whenever it uses violence against its enemies.

But the discussions of laymen about the regularity or irregularity of its measures only show the delusions of laymen who permit themselves to discuss the actions of the infallible church.

Thus spoke and always speak the opponents of toleration.

But its advocates assert that it is unjust by force to prevent the profession of faiths which dissent from Orthodoxy, and that the subdivision made by the adversaries of toleration between belief and external profession of faith was without foundation, since every belief inevitably finds an expression in external actions.

Besides, they said, for the true church, which has Christ at its head, and His promise that no one shall overcome His church, there can be no danger from the profession of the lie by a small number of heretics or dissenters, the more so, since the persecutions themselves do not attain their end, for the reason that martyrdom only weakens the moral authority of the persecuting church, and increases the power of the persecuted.

## 2

The advocates of toleration say that the church must in no case use violence against its dissenting members

and against those who profess different faiths. The church must not use violence! But here involuntarily arises the question: How can the church use violence?

The Christian church, by the definition which it gives itself, is a society of men, established by God, which has for its aim the transmission to men of the true faith, which saves them in this world and in the world to come.

How, then, can such a society of men, who have for their instruments grace and the sermon, wish for violence and actually exert it against people who do not accept their belief?

To advise the church not to persecute men who dissent from it or convert its members, is the same as advising an academy of learned men not to persecute, punish, deport, and so forth, those people who do not agree with their opinions. An academy of learned men cannot wish for such things, and if it did, it cannot do so, because it has no instruments with which to do it.

What, then, signify those persecutions which since the time of Constantine have been employed by the Christian church and which the advocates of religious toleration advise the church to put a stop to?

### 3

Mr. Stakhóvich, quoting in his speech Guizot's words about the necessity for liberty of conscience for the Christian religion, after these good and clear words of Guizot adduces the bad and confused words of Aksákov, who substitutes the concept of "church" for that of "Christian religion," and, having made this substitution, tries to prove the possibility and necessity of religious toleration for the Christian church. But Christian religion and Christian church are not one and the same thing, and we have no right whatever to assume that what is proper for

the Christian religion is also proper for the Christian church.

The Christian religion is that higher consciousness of man's relation to God, which, ascending from a lower to a higher degree of religious consciousness, has been attained by humanity. And so the Christian religion and all men who profess the true Christian religion, knowing that they have reached a certain degree of clearness and a certain height of the religious consciousness only thanks to humanity's constant motion from darkness to light, cannot help but be tolerant. By recognizing themselves as in possession of but a certain degree of the truth, which is made clearer and clearer and rises higher and higher only through the united efforts of humanity, they, in meeting new beliefs which differ from their own, not only do not reject them, but joyfully welcome them, study them, verify their own beliefs according to them, reject what is not in agreement with reason, accept what elucidates and advances the truth professed by them, and still more become confirmed in what is the same in all beliefs.

Such is the property of the Christian religion in general, and thus act the men who profess Christianity. Not thus the church. The church, by recognizing itself as the one guardian of the full, divine, eternal, for ever unchangeable truth, which God Himself has revealed to men, cannot help but look upon every religious teaching that differs from that which is expressed in its own dogmas as upon a lying, harmful, and even ill-intentioned teaching (if it proceeds from those who know the condition of the church), which is drawing people to everlasting perdition. And so, by its own definition, the church cannot be tolerant and cannot help using against all the faiths, as also against the professors of faiths which dissent from its own, all those means which it considers in keeping with its own doctrine. Thus the Christian religion and the Christian church are two totally different conceptions.



It is true, every church asserts that it is the only representative of Christianity, but the Christian religion, that is, the professors of the free Christian religion, in no way considers the church to be the representative of Christianity. The professors of the Christian religion could not do so, since there are many churches, and each regards itself as the bearer of all the divine truth.

It is this confusion of two different conceptions, which is constantly used by the churchmen for various purposes, that is the cause why all their discussions about the desirability of religious toleration for the church suffer from a common obscurity, inflatedness, indefiniteness, and so complete inconclusiveness.

Such are in Russia all the discussions of a Khomyákov, Samárin, Aksákov, and so forth, and from this also suffers Mr. Stakhóvich's speech. They are all not only empty, but even harmful babbling, which again drives incense smoke into the eyes of those who are beginning to be freed from the deception.

## 4

Thus the answer to the question as to how the church, which is defined as a society of men having for their purpose the preaching of the truth, and which has no instruments of violence and can have none, can none the less exert violence against the dissenting faiths, is only this, that the establishment which calls itself the Christian church is not a Christian, but a worldly institution which is different from Christianity and is rather hostile to it.

When this idea first came to me, I did not believe it, so firmly have we been impressed from childhood with awe for the sacredness of the church. At first I thought that it was a paradox, that in such a definition of the church there was some mistake. But the farther I proceeded in viewing this question from all sides, the more indubitable

it became to me that the definition of the church as a non-Christian institution, hostile to Christianity, was precise, and that without it we could not explain all those contradictions which are contained in the past and the present activity of the church.

Indeed, what is the church? The professors of the church say that it is a society, established by Christ, which has been entrusted with the exclusive care and propaganda of the unquestionable divine truth, which was testified to by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the members of the church, and that this testimony of the Holy Ghost is transmitted from generation to generation by the putting on of hands, as established by Christ.

But we need only analyze the data by which this is proved, to become convinced that all these assertions are quite arbitrary. The two texts (of the Scripture, which the church considers sacred), on which the arguments about the establishment of the church by Christ Himself are based, do not have at all the significance ascribed to them and in no case can they signify the establishment of a church, since the very concept of the church did not at all exist in the time when the Gospel was written, much less in the time of Christ. But the third text on which they base their exclusive right to teach the divine truth, the final verses of Mark and Matthew, is by all the investigators of Holy Scripture recognized as forged. Still less can it be proved that the descent of tongues of fire upon the heads of the disciples, which was seen only by the disciples, signifies that everything which shall be said, not only by these disciples, but also by all those upon whom the disciples have laid their hands, will be said by God, that is, by the Holy Ghost, and so is always unquestionably true.

The main thing is this, that, even if this were proved (which is quite impossible), there is no possibility of

proving that this gift of infallibility abides precisely in the church which asserts this of itself. The chief, insoluble difficulty is this, that the church is not one and that every church asserts concerning itself that it alone has the truth, while all the others are wrong. Thus the assertion of every church that it alone has the truth has really as much weight as the assertion of a man who says, "Upon my word, I am right, and all those who disagree with me are wrong."

"Upon my word, we alone constitute the true church," — in this alone are all the proofs of the infallibility of every church to be found. Such a basis, in itself very shaky and very false, has also this other fault, that, by excluding every verification of what the church, which considers itself infallible, preaches, it opens an unlimited field for all kinds of most confused fancies, which are given out as the truth. When senseless and fantastic assertions are given out as the truth, there naturally appear men who protest against such assertions. But to compel people to believe in senseless and fantastic assertions, there exists but one means, — violence.

The whole Nicene symbol is a concatenation of senseless and fantastic assertions, which could have arisen only among men who recognized themselves as infallible, and could have been disseminated only through violence.

Before all time God the Father begot God the Son, from whom everything began. This Son was sent into the world to save men and there was born anew of a virgin, and was crucified, and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, where he sits on the right side of the Father. At the end of the world this Son will come to judge the living and the dead, — and all that is an indubitable truth, revealed by God Himself.

If we are unable in the twentieth century to accept all these dogmas, which are contrary to common sense and

to human knowledge, people were not deprived of common sense even at the time of the Nicene Council and could not have been able to accept all these strange dogmas, and expressed their dissent from them.

But the church, regarding itself as alone in possession of the full truth, could not admit this and used the most effective means against this dissent and its dissemination, — violence.

The church, united with the temporal power, has always made use of violence, — latent violence, — but none the less definite and effective; it collected taxes from everybody by force, without inquiring after their agreement or disagreement with the state religion, and demanded of them the profession of that religion.

Having collected the money by violence, it in this manner established the most powerful hypnotization for the strengthening of its own faith among children and adults. If this means was not sufficient, it simply employed the violence of the temporal power. Thus there can be no such thing as religious toleration in the church, which is supported by the state. And this cannot be otherwise, so long as the churches are churches.

It will be said: the churches, like those of the Quakers, Wesleyans, Shakers, Mormons, and, especially now, the Catholic congregations, collect money from their members without the exertion of force, and so do not exert violence in supporting themselves. But that is not true: the money which has been collected by rich men, especially the Catholic congregations, during centuries of hypnotization by means of money, is not a free contribution by the members of the church, but the result of the grossest violence. Money is collected by means of violence and is always an instrument of violence. For the church to be able to consider itself tolerant, it must be free from all monetary influences. "You have received it gratis — give it gratis."

## 5

In reality the church has no instruments of violence. If violence is exerted, it is not exerted by the church itself, but by the temporal power with which it is connected, and so there appears the question: why do the government and the ruling classes unite with the church and support it? It would seem that the beliefs preached by the church ought to be a matter of indifference to the governments and the ruling classes. It would seem that it ought to be a matter of absolute indifference to the governments and the ruling classes what the nations governed by them believe in, — whether they are Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, or Mohammedans. But that is not so.

At any time the religious beliefs correspond to the social structure, that is, the social structure arranges itself in accordance with the religious beliefs. And thus, as the religious beliefs of the nation are, so is also the social structure. The governments and the ruling classes know that, and, therefore, they always support the religious teaching which corresponds to their advantageous position. The governments and the ruling classes know that the true Christian religion denies the power which is based on violence, the distinction of classes, the accumulation of wealth, punishments, wars, — everything in consequence of which the government and the ruling classes occupy their advantageous position, and so they consider it necessary to support the faith which justifies their position. This is done by the church-corrupted Christianity, in that, by having distorted the true Christianity, it conceals the access to it from people.

The governments and the ruling classes could not exist without this corruption of Christianity, which is called the church faith. The church with its lie could not exist without any direct or indirect violence of the governments

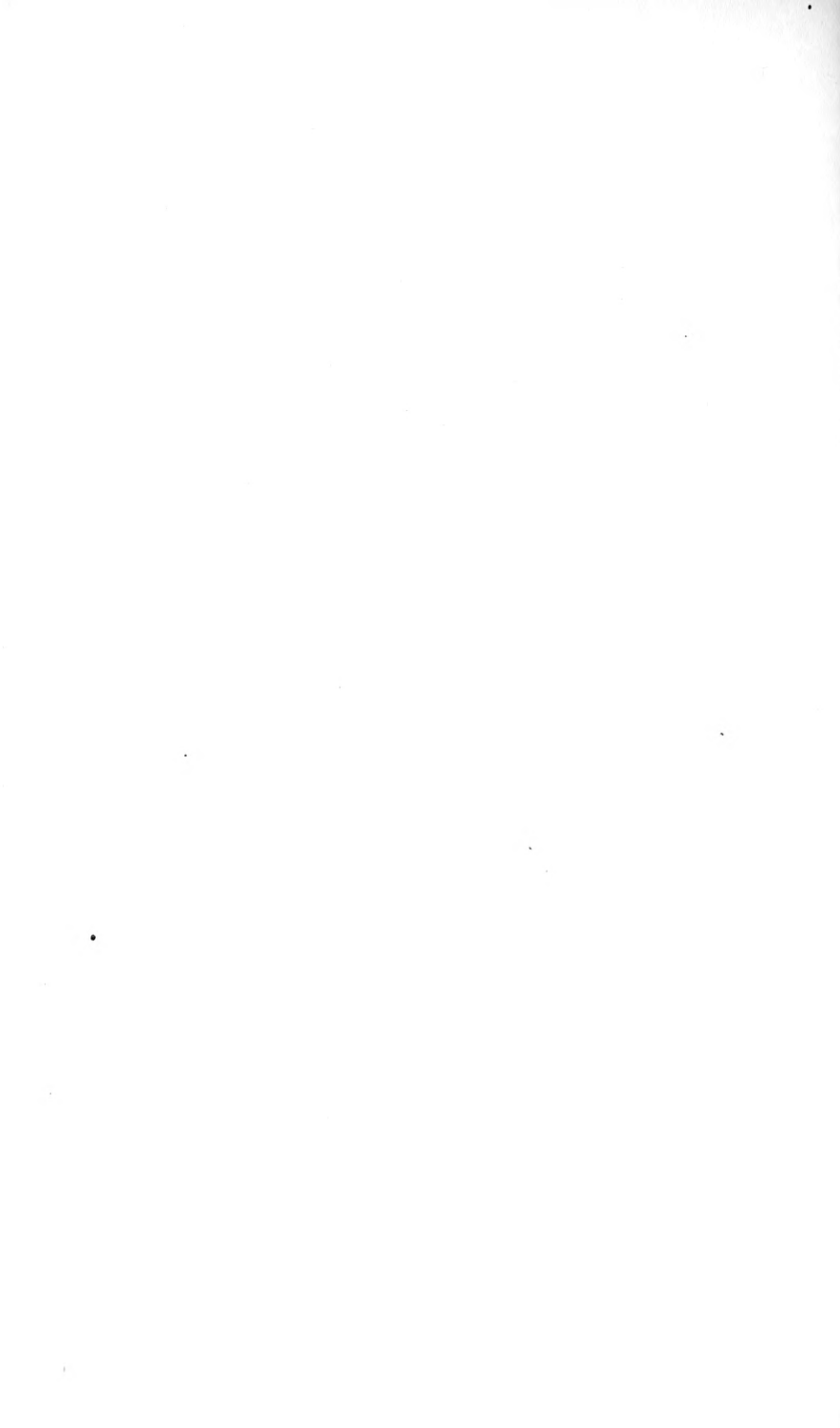
or of the ruling classes. In some states this violence finds its expression in persecutions; in others, in the exclusive protection granted to the wealthy classes, which are in possession of the wealth. But the possession of wealth is conditioned by violence. Therefore, the church, the government, and the ruling classes mutually support one another. Thus the opponents of religious toleration are quite right when they defend, on the part of the church, the right of violence and persecutions on which its existence is based. The advocates of religious toleration would be right only in case they did not turn to the church, but to the state, and in case they demanded what is incorrectly called the "separation of church and state," but what in reality is only the cessation of the government's exclusive support by the direct means of violence, or by the indirect means, — the subsidizing of some one faith.

But to demand of the church that it should refrain from violence in any shape whatever is the same as to demand of a man who is besieged on all sides that he shall lay down his arms and surrender himself to the enemy.

Tolerant can be only the true, free Christianity, which is not connected with any worldly institutions, and so is afraid of nothing and of no one, and has for its aim a greater and ever greater recognition of the divine truth and a greater and ever greater realization of the same in life.

LETTERS ON AND TO THE  
DUKHOBORS

1895 - 1900





# LETTERS ON AND TO THE DUKHOBORS

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## PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN RUSSIA IN 1895

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF AN ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

DEAR SIR: — I send you for publication in your newspaper a memorandum about the persecutions to which the Dukhobors, sectarians of the Caucasus, were subjected this summer. There is only one way of helping the persecuted, but especially the persecutors, who do not know what they do, and that is, publicity, the presentation of the matter to the judgment of public opinion, which, by expressing its disapproval of the persecutors and its sympathy with the persecuted, will keep the first from committing acts of cruelty, which frequently are only the result of their crass ignorance, and will sustain courage in the second and will give them consolations in their sufferings.

In Russia this article will not be passed by the censor, and so I turn to you, asking you to publish it in your paper. This memorandum was composed by a friend of mine, who travelled to the spot, to collect exact information in regard to the occurrences, and so the information given may be depended upon.

The fact that the information given in this article was received only from one side, the persecuted, while the other side, that of the persecutors, was not asked, does not diminish the reliability of the information. The persecuted had no reason to conceal what they were doing: they proclaimed it to the whole world; but the persecutors cannot help but be ashamed of the measures which they employed against the persecuted, and so they will do everything in their power to conceal their acts. But if in the accounts of the Dukhobors there might have been any exaggerations, we have carefully excluded everything which appeared so to us.

What is reliable and undoubted in this memorandum is the essential part, namely, that the Dukhobors have in various places been subjected to repeated tortures, that the majority of them are shut up in prisons, and that more than 450 families are completely ruined and driven out of their homes, only because they would not act contrary to their religious convictions.

All this is unquestionably reliable, because it was printed in many Russian newspapers and did not provoke any denial on the part of the government.

The ideas evoked in me by these events I have expressed separately, and, if you want them, I will send them to you to be printed after this memorandum has appeared.

#### EPILOGUE TO THE MEMORANDUM

In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John xvi. 33).

The Dukhobors settled in the Caucasus have been subjected to cruel persecutions by the Russian authorities, and these persecutions, as described in a note written by a man who went to the spot, have been continued until the present time.

The Dukhobors have been beaten, flogged, and trampled

underfoot by horses; the Cossacks were quartered upon the Dukhobor settlements, and with permission of the authorities they permitted themselves all kinds of acts of violence against the inhabitants; those who refused to do military service were tortured physically and morally, and prosperous settlers, who by the labour of decades had established their prosperity, were driven from their homes and settled without allotment of land and without means of subsistence in Georgian villages.

The cause of these persecutions is this, that through various causes three-fourths of all the Dukhobors, namely, about fifteen thousand men (there are twenty thousand of them), of late returned with new vigour and conscious effort to their former Christian beliefs and this summer decided to carry out Christ's law of not resisting evil with violence. This decision on the one hand caused them to destroy their weapons, which in the Caucasus are considered to be such a necessity, and thus, by renouncing every possibility of resisting by means of violence, to give themselves into the power of every violator; on the other hand it led them under no condition to take part in any acts of violence, as demanded of them by the government, consequently also in no military or other service, which would demand the employment of violence. The government could not admit such a departure of tens of thousands from the demands established by law, and a struggle ensued. Their government demands the fulfilment of its demands. The Dukhobors do not submit.

The government cannot yield. Not only has such a refusal of the Dukhobors to fulfil the demands of the government no legal foundation, from the worldly point of view, and is contrary to all the existing and time-honoured order, but it is also impossible to admit these refusals, if for no other reason, because, if they be admitted in the case of ten, there will to-morrow be one thousand, one hundred thousand, who will similarly

refuse to bear the burdens of taxes and service. Admit this, and, instead of order and protection of life, there will ensue arbitrary rule and chaos, and nobody's property and life will be protected. Thus the governmental persons must reason, and they cannot reason otherwise, and are not at all to blame for reasoning thus. Aside from any egotistical concern that such refusals must deprive him of his means of existence, which are collected from the masses by force, aside from every egotistical concern about himself, every man connected with the government, from the Tsar down to the rural chief, must to the bottom of his heart be provoked by the refusal of some uncultured, semi-illiterate people to fulfil the demands of the government, which are obligatory for all men. "By what right," he thinks, "do these insignificant people allow themselves to deny what is recognized by all, is sanctified by law, and is done everywhere?" And, indeed, the governmental persons cannot be blamed for acting as they do. They employ violence, rude violence, but they cannot do otherwise. Indeed, is it possible by means of rational, humane means to compel people who profess the Christian faith to enter into the class of men who teach murder and prepare themselves for it? It is possible to sustain the deceived people in the deception by means of every kind of stultification, oaths, theological, philosophical, and juridical sophisms, but the moment the deception is in some way destroyed, and people, like the Dukhobors, calling things by their name, say, "We are Christians and so cannot kill," the lie is revealed, and it becomes impossible to convince such people by means of rational proofs. The only possibility of compelling such people to obey consists in blows, executions, confiscation of the home, and hunger and cold for the members of their families. And this they do. So long as the men of the government have not come to see their delusion, they can do nothing else and so are not to blame. Still less are to blame the

Christians who refuse to take part in the study of murder and to enter into a class of men who are educated to kill all those whom the government commands them to kill. They, too, cannot act otherwise. A so-called Christian, who is baptized and brought up in Orthodoxy, Catholicism, or Protestantism, can continue to serve violence and murder, so long as he does not understand the deception to which he was subjected. But the moment he comes to understand that every man is responsible to God for his acts, and that this responsibility cannot be shifted, nor be removed from him by an oath, and that he must not kill nor prepare himself for murder, his participation in the army becomes morally as impossible as it is physically impossible for him to lift a weight of one hundred puds.

In this does the terrible tragedy of the relation of Christianity to the government consist. The tragedy is this, that the governments have to rule over Christian nations, which are not yet entirely enlightened, but are becoming from day to day more enlightened by Christ's teaching. All the governments since the time of Constantine have known and felt this, and have for their self-preservation instinctively done everything they could, in order to shroud the true meaning of Christianity and crush its spirit. They have known that if this spirit is acquired by men, violence will come to an end and government will naturally destroy itself, and so the governments have done their work, building up the governmental establishments, heaping laws and institutions one upon another, and hoping to bury underneath it the undying spirit of Christ, which is implanted in the hearts of men.

The governments have done their work, but the Christian teaching has at the same time done its work, penetrating deeper and deeper into the hearts of men. And the time came when the Christian cause, as it ought,

because the Christian cause is God's cause, while the government's cause is man's cause, got ahead of the government's cause.

And as in the burning of a pyre there comes a time when the fire, after it has worked within for a long time and only by an occasional burst of fire and smoke has indicated its presence, finally bursts forth on all sides, and it becomes impossible to stop the burning, even so in the struggle of the Christian spirit with the pagan laws and institutions there comes a time when this Christian spirit bursts forth everywhere, can no longer be subdued, and every moment threatens destruction to those institutions which were heaped upon it.

Indeed, what can and must the government do in respect to these fifteen thousand Dukhobors, who refuse to do military service? What is to be done with them? They cannot be left as they are. Even with the present state of affairs in the beginning of the motion, there have appeared Orthodox people who have followed the example set by the Dukhobors. What will happen later? What will happen later, if the same shall be done by the Milkers, Stundists, Lashers, Wanderers, who look upon the government and the military service in just the same way, but have not done like the Dukhobors, only because they could not make up their minds to be the first, and were afraid of suffering? And there are millions of such people, not in Russia alone, but in all Christian countries, and not only in Christian countries, but also in Mussulman countries, in Persia and Turkey and Arabia, people like the Harijites and Babists. It is necessary for the sake of others to make harmless tens of thousands of men who do not recognize governments and do not wish to take part in them. How is this to be done? It is impossible to kill them: there are too many of them. It is awkward to put them all in prison. All that can be done is to ruin and torment them; and it is this that

is done with them. But what if these torments shall not have the desired effect, and they shall continue to profess the truth and so shall attract a still greater number of men to follow their example?

The position of the governments is terrible, terrible for this very reason, that they have nothing to fall back upon. It is certainly impossible to recognize as bad the acts of men like Drózhzhin, who was tortured to death in a prison, or like Izyumchénko, who is even now pining away in Siberia, or like Doctor Shkarvan, who is sentenced to imprisonment in Austria, or like all those who are now in prison, prepared for suffering and for death, if only they do not have to depart from their very simple, all-comprehensible, universally approved religious convictions, which prohibit murder and participation in it. By no intricacy of thought is it possible to call the acts of these men bad or unchristian, and it is not only impossible not to approve of them, but even not to be delighted with them, because it is impossible not to recognize that the men who act in this manner act so in the name of the very highest qualities of the human soul, without the recognition of whose height human life falls down to the level of animal existence. If the government shall not persecute men who, like the Dukhobors, Stundists, Nazarenes, and separate individuals, refuse to take part in the acts of the government, the advantage of the Christian peaceable manner of life will attract to itself not only sincerely convinced Christians, but also such as will put on the mask of Christianity for the sake of their advantage, and so the number of men who do not fulfil the demands of the government will grow larger and larger. But if the government is cruel, as it now is, to such men, this cruelty itself toward men who are guilty of nothing but leading a more moral and a better life than others, and want in practice to fulfil the law of the good, as professed by all men, will more and more

repel people from the government. And very soon the governments will not find any people who are ready to support them by means of violence. The semisavage Cossacks, who beat the Dukhobors by order of the authorities, very soon "began to pine," as they expressed themselves, when they were quartered in the Dukhobor settlements, that is, their consciences began to trouble them, and the authorities, fearing the harmful influence of the Dukhobors upon them, hastened to take them away from there.

Not one persecution of innocent people ends otherwise than by men's passing over from among the persecutors to the convictions of the persecuted, as was the case with the warrior Simon, who destroyed the Paulicians and then passed over to their faith. The more lenient the government shall be to the people who profess Christianity, the more quickly will the number of the true Christians be increased. The more cruel the government shall be, the more quickly will the number of people who serve the government be diminished. Thus, whether the government treats people, who in their life profess Christianity, with leniency or cruelty, it will itself in every way contribute to its own destruction. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of the world be cast out" (John xii. 31). This judgment was achieved eighteen hundred years ago, that is, when in the place of the truth of external justice was put the truth of love. No matter how much brush is thrown on a burning pile, for the purpose of putting out the fire,—the undying fire, the fire of truth, will be choked for a little while only, but will be fanned more than before and will burn everything which is put on it.

Even if it should happen that a few champions of truth, as has always happened, should weaken in their struggle and fulfil the government's demands, this would not change the situation one hair's breadth. Let the



Dukhobors of the Caucasus surrender, succumbing to the sufferings to which their grandparents, wives, and children are subjected, there will to-morrow arise new champions, who will be prepared on all sides and will more and more boldly put forth their demands and will less and less be able to surrender. The truth cannot stop being the truth, because under the pressure of sufferings people who bear testimony to it grow faint. The divine must vanquish the human.

“But what will happen if the government is destroyed?” I hear the question, which is always put by the advocates of power, on the assumption that if there shall not be what now is, there will be nothing, and everything will perish. The answer to this question is always one and the same. There will be what must be, what pleases God, what is in agreement with His law, as implanted in our hearts and revealed to our reason. If the government should be destroyed because we, as the revolutionists did, should destroy it, then it would be natural for the question as to what would happen after the government is destroyed to demand an answer from those who destroy the government. But the destruction of the government which is taking place now is not taking place because some one, some people, want deliberately to destroy it: it is being destroyed, because it is not in harmony with the will of God, which was revealed to our reason and implanted in our hearts. A man who refuses to put his brothers into prisons and to kill them has no intention of destroying the government; he merely does not want to do what is contrary to the will of God, what not only he, but even all men who have come out of the beastly state, recognize as an unquestionable evil. If by this the government is destroyed, it means only that the government demands what is contrary to God’s will, that is, evil, and that, therefore, the government is an evil and must be destroyed. The

change which in our time is taking place in the social life of the nations, though we cannot entirely imagine the form which it will assume, cannot be bad, because this change takes place and will take place, not by the arbitrary will of men, but by an internal demand, common to all men, of the divine principle which is implanted in the hearts of men. When childbirth takes place, all our activity should be directed, not to counteracting it, but to aiding it. But this aid is not attained by a departure from the divine truth revealed to us, but, on the contrary, by a public and fearless profession of it. Such a profession of the truth gives, not only full satisfaction to those who profess the truth, but also the greatest good to men, both to the violated and the violators. Salvation is not behind, but before us.

The moment of the crisis in the change of the social form of life and of the substitution for the violence-using government of another force which shall bind men together has already come. And the way out of it is no longer in the arrest of the process or in the reverse motion, but only in the forward movement along the path which in the hearts of men is pointed out to them by Christ's law.

One more little effort, and the Galilean will conquer, — not in that terrible sense in which the pagan king ascribed victory to Him, but in the true sense, in which He said of Himself that He had overcome the world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33); for He has, indeed, overcome the world, not in the mystical sense of an invisible victory over sin, but in the simple, clear, and comprehensible sense that, if we shall only be of good cheer and shall boldly profess Him, there will very soon not only be an end to all those terrible persecutions which are committed against all the true disciples of Christ who profess His teaching in fact, but there will also be an end to pris-

ons, gallows, wars, debauchery, luxury, idleness, poverty crushed by labour, under which Christian humanity now groans.

*September 19, 1895.*

## TWO LETTERS TO THE LEADER OF THE DUKHOBORS, P. V. VERIGIN

### 1

DEAR BROTHER:— I. M. Tregúbov sent me your letter to him, and I read it with pleasure; I was happy to learn something about you, and I, so to speak, heard your voice and understood what you are thinking about, how you think, and what you live by. I see from your letter that you live in a spiritual world and are busy with spiritual questions. For the good of men that is most important, because only in the spirit is man free, and only by means of the spirit is God's work done, and only in the spirit does man feel himself to be in union with God, since "God is spirit." The ideas expressed by you in the letter as to the superiority of a living communion to the dead book have pleased me very much, and I share them with you. I write books, and so I know all the harm which they produce; I know how people, who do not wish to accept the truth, know how not to read or understand what goes against the grain and arraigns them, how they misinterpret and distort, how they have misinterpreted the Gospel. I know all that, but still I consider books to be inevitable in our time. I say "in our time," in distinction from the evangelical times when there was no printing, when there were no books, and there existed only an oral means for the diffusion of ideas. It was then possible to get along without a book, because even the enemies of truth did not have any book; but now it is not right to leave this powerful instrument for

deception to the enemies alone, and not to make use of it for the sake of truth. Not to make use of books or of writing for the transmission of our thoughts or for the acquisition of other people's thoughts is the same as not to make use of the force of our voice for imparting at once to several people what we have to say, or not to make use of our hearing to understand what another person is saying aloud, and to recognize the possibility of the transmission and acquisition of thought only in private or in a whisper.

Writing and printing have only increased a thousand times, a hundred thousand times, the number of men who may hear him who expresses his thoughts, but the relation between the exponent and the recipient remains the same: it is with print as with an oral conversation, in which the hearer may grasp and understand what is being told him, or may just as well pay no heed to it; a hearer may do with his ears what a reader does with a book, when he misinterprets it completely; just as we see them write in books much that is useless and trifling, so it is also with speaking. There is some difference, but the difference is sometimes in favour of oral, and sometimes of printed intercourse. The advantage of an oral transmission is this, that the hearer feels the soul of the speaker; but there is also a disadvantage connected with it, which is, that very frequently empty talkers, such as lawyers, who are endowed with the gift of speech, carry away people, not by the reasonableness of their argument, but by the mastery of their oratorical art, which is not the case with books; another advantage of the oral transmission is this, that he who does not understand may ask a question, but the disadvantage is this, that those who do not understand, who frequently do not understand on purpose, may ask something irrelevant and thus interrupt the train of thought, which also is not the case with books.

The disadvantages of books are these, that, in the first place, paper is very patient, and it is possible to express nonsense, which costs enormous labour on the part of those who make the paper and set up the type, which cannot be done in the oral transmission, because nobody is going to listen to nonsense; in the second place, books grow in enormous numbers, while good ones are lost in a sea of stupid, empty, and harmful books. But the advantages of printing are also very great, consisting mainly in this, that the circle of hearers is increased a hundredfold and a thousandfold, as compared with the hearers of an oral discourse. And this increase in the number of hearers is important, not because there are many of them, but because amidst millions of people of various nations and positions, to whom the book is accessible, there will naturally be segregated some who share the same ideas, and, thanks to the book, though tens of thousands of versts apart and not acquainted with one another, they are united and live as one soul and receive spiritual joy and a lively consciousness that they are not alone. It is such communion that I now hold with you and with many, very many people of other nations, who have never seen me, but who are nearer to me than my own carnal sons and brothers. But the chief consideration in favour of the book is this, that with a certain degree of the development of the external conditions of life, books, printing in general, have become a means for people's intercommunication, and so this means cannot be neglected. So many harmful books have been written and disseminated that this harm can be counteracted only by means of books. One wedge drives out another. Christ has said, "What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." The printed word is this same proclamation from the housetops. The printed word is the same tongue, only it reaches very far, and so everything which is said of the tongue refers also to the printed word: with it we bless God, and with it we curse

men, who are created in the image of God; and so we cannot be sufficiently attentive to what we say and hear, as also to what we print and read. I write all this, not because I think that you think differently (I see from your letter that you understand it in the same way), but because these thoughts occurred to me and I wanted to share them with you. I read with especial pleasure what you say about this, that, "if we preserved everything already given us from above, we should be completely happy; what is indispensable and legitimate must by all means be in every one and is received directly from above or from within." That is quite true, and I myself understand man in the same way. Every man would unquestionably know the whole divine truth, everything which he ought to know, in order to fulfil in this life what God wants of him, if only this truth, as revealed to man, were not dimmed by false human interpretations. And so, to learn the divine truth, a man must first of all reject all the false interpretations and all the worldly temptations, which lead him to the acceptance of these interpretations, and then there will be left the one truth, which is accessible to babes, because it is proper for the human soul. But the chief difficulty lies in this, that, in rejecting the lie, we are likely to reject with it a part of the truth, and that, in elucidating the truth, we are likely to introduce new errors.

I thank you, dear brother, for the greeting which you sent me. Write me to Moscow, if nothing interferes. Can I not do something for you? You will make me happy by giving me some commission.

I embrace you in brotherly love.

*November 21, 1895.*

2

DEAR FRIEND:—I received your letter yesterday, and I hasten to answer you. It takes a long time for our

letters to reach one another, and I have not much time left to live.

In your argument against books there is much justice and cleverness, — the comparison with the assistant and the surgeon, — but they are none of them well grounded, mainly because you compare books with the living intercourse, as though books excluded the living intercourse. In reality one does not exclude the other, and one helps the other.

To tell you the truth, your stubborn opposition to books looks to me like an exclusive sectarian method of defence of an opinion, as once accepted and expressed. Such an exclusiveness does not harmonize with that idea which I have formed of your intellect and, above all, of your openness and sincerity. God leads men toward Himself and toward the fulfilment of His will by all kinds of paths, — by a conscious one, when men try to do His will, and by an unconscious one, when they do, as they think, their own will.

To do God's will, to fulfil His kingdom upon earth, we need the union of men among themselves, we need that all men should be one, as Christ recognized Himself one with the Father. For this union there are needed an internal means, — the cognition and clear expression of the truth, such as was given by Christ and as unites all men, and an external means, — the dissemination of this expression of the truth, which is accomplished in the most varied ways: by commerce, by conquests, by travel, by books, by railways, by telegraphs, and by many other means, some of which, like conquest, I must reject, but others, like books and rapid means of communication, I have no reason to reject and cannot help using, if I do not wish to deprive myself of a convenient instrument for serving God. But as to the retort, that for books and for the railways it is necessary to crawl underground for the ore and into a smelting furnace, that is also true



in the case of the ploughshare, the spade, the seythe. And then, there is nothing wrong in having to crawl underground for the ore or to work in a smelting furnace, and when I was a young man I, like any good young man, would have gladly crawled underground to work in iron, just for the sake of bravado, so long as that would not have been compulsory and would not have lasted a whole life, and would have been surrounded by all kinds of conveniences, which men will certainly invent some day, when all shall work, and not merely some hired people.

Well, we will not speak any more of it; but believe me, that, if I write to you what I do, I do not do so because I have written a lot of books and still continue to write them, — I with my whole heart agree with you that the simplest, best life is more precious than the most beautiful books, — and not even because thanks to books I enter into communion with people: this autumn I entered into communion with a Hindoo, who fully shares our Christian views and who sent me an English book by a countryman of his, in which there is an exposition of the teaching of the Brahmins that coincides with the essence of Christ's teaching, and I entered into communion with some Japanese, two of whom visited me the other day, and who profess and preach a purely Christian morality. It is not this that urges me to disagree with you and not to reject printing, any more than railways, telephones, and similar things, but this, that, when I see an ant-hill in the meadow, I cannot admit that the ants must be in error, when they raise that hill and do everything they do in it. Similarly, as I look at everything which men have done in a material way, I cannot admit that they have done it all by mistake. As a man (and not an ant), I see defects in the human hill and cannot help wishing to correct them, — in this does my share in the common work consist, — I do not wish to destroy the whole hill

of human labour, but only more correctly to distribute what is placed irregularly in it. There is very much that is irregularly distributed in the human hill, and it is about this that I have written and write, have suffered and suffer, and try to change to the best of my strength.

What is irregular in our life is, in the first place and above all else, this, that the means is taken for the end, that what ought to be the end — the good of our neighbour — is made a means, that is, that man's good, his very life, is sacrificed for the production of an instrument, which is at times needed for all men, and at times only for the whim of one person, as is the case when human lives are ruined in the production of articles which are needed only by a few and which often are not needed by any one and are even harmful. What is irregular is this, that men forget or do not know that not only for the production of a mirror, but even of the most important and necessary articles, — as of a ploughshare, a scythe, — there should not only no life be ruined, but even the happiness of ever so insignificant a man should not be impaired, because the meaning of human life is only in the good of all men. To violate the life and the good of any one man for the good of men is the same as to cut off an animal's limb for its good.

In this does the terrible mistake of our time consist; not in this, that we have printing, railways, and such things, but in this, that men consider it allowable to sacrifice the good of even one man for the performance of any work. As soon as men lost the meaning and the purpose of what they are doing (there is but one end, — the good of our neighbour), the moment they decided that we could sacrifice the life and the good of an old man or even an idiot, who is living as a burden to all people, it became possible to sacrifice even a less old and stupid person, and there is no limit, — we may sacrifice

everybody for a cause. That is irregular, and against that we must struggle.

Men must come to understand that, no matter how useful and important the printing of books, the railways, a plough, a scythe, may seem to us, we do not need them, and must let them go to perdition, until we have learned to make them without ruining the happiness and lives of men. In this does the whole question consist, and people blunder in this question, going about it now from one side, and now from another. Some say: "You want to destroy everything that humanity has acquired with so much labour,—you want to return to barbarism, in the name of some moral demands. The moral demands are irregular, if they are contrary to the well-being which humanity attains by its progress." Others say: "I am afraid that you are of that opinion and ascribe that opinion to me,—that, since all the material perfections of life are contrary to the moral demands, all these perfections are false in themselves and must be abandoned." To the first objectors I reply that there is nothing to destroy, and that we must only not forget that the aim of the life of humanity is the good of all men, and that, therefore, the moment any improvement deprives even one person of the good, this improvement must be given up and must not be used, until a means is found for producing and using it in such a way that the good of not even one man is impaired. I think that with such a view of life many aimless and harmful productions will be discontinued, and for the useful ones very soon means will be found for producing them, without impairing the good of men. To the second class of objectors I reply that humanity, in passing from the stone age to the bronze and iron age, and then reaching the present material condition, could by no means have erred, but followed the invariable law of perfection, and that it is not only not desirable to turn back, but that it is even impossible to do so, as it is

impossible again to become an ape, and that, indeed, the problem of the man of our time does not at all consist in dreaming of what men used to be and how they could again become such as they were, but in serving the good of the men now living. But for the good of the men now living it is necessary for people not to torment or oppress others, not to deprive them of the products of their labour, not to compel them to work at things that are useless for them or that they cannot make use of, and, above all, not to consider it possible or lawful, in the name of any cause or material success, to impair the life and the good of a neighbour or, what is the same from another side, — not to violate love.

If men only knew that the end of humanity is not material progress, that this progress is an inevitable growth, while the one end is the good of all men, that this end is higher than any material purpose which men may set for themselves, everything would occupy its proper place. It is to this that the men of our time must direct all their efforts.

To lament the fact that men cannot now live without implements, like the beasts of the forest, living on nothing but fruits, is the same as though I, an old man, should lament because I have no teeth, nor black hairs, nor that strength which I had in my youth. What I must do is not to put in false teeth nor dye my hair nor take gymnastic exercises, but to try to live as becomes an old man, putting in the first place, not worldly matters, but God's work, — union and love, and admitting worldly matters only to the extent to which they do not interfere with God's work. It is this that humanity, too, ought to do at the present period of life.

But to say that the railways, gas, electricity, the printing of books, are injurious, because through them human lives are lost, is the same as though we should say that it is injurious to plough and sow, only because I did not

plough the field in time and allowed it to be overgrown and then sowed it in and ploughed it up, that is, because I did first what ought to have been done last.

I was very glad to hear what you write about your life and how you apply to life what you preach and under these hard conditions, in which you are, earn a livelihood by labour. In nothing else is the sincerity of man recognized so much as in this. I have become very bad in this respect: I am very much surrounded by all kinds of luxury, which I despise and from which I have not the strength to get away. Therefore your example supports me and I continue to try.

Thank you for the excerpts from the diary. In respect to your ideas, as expressed there, I should like to exchange with you my views in the same direction. I will do so another time.

Meanwhile good-bye. Please, do not allow an unkind feeling to rise against me for my objections to your ideas, which you express not only in your letter to me, but also in your letter to Ev. Iv. You are very dear to me, and I try to be as open, as brotherly, to you as I can.

Your loving

LEV TOLSTÓY.

*October 14, 1896.*

## NOBEL'S BEQUEST

I READ in some Swedish papers that by Nobel's will a certain sum of money is bequeathed to him who shall most serve the cause of peace.

I assume that the men who served the cause of peace did so only because they served God ; and every monetary reward can only be disagreeable to them, in that it gives a selfish character to their service of God. For this reason it would seem that this condition of Nobel's will can hardly be executed correctly. Indeed, it cannot be correctly executed in relation to the men themselves who have all the time served the cause of peace ; but, I presume, it will be quite correctly executed, if the money shall be distributed among the families of those men who have served the cause of peace and in consequence of this service are in a most difficult and wretched condition. I am speaking of the families of the Dukhobors of the Caucasus, who, to the number of four thousand people, have been suffering these three years from the Russian government's severe treatment of them, because their husbands, sons, and fathers refuse to do active or reserve military service.

Thirty-two of those who have refused have, after having stayed in the disciplinary battalion, where two of them died, been sent to the worst parts of Siberia, and about three hundred men are pining away in the prisons of the Caucasus and of Russia.

The incompatibility of military service with the profession of Christianity has always been clear for all true Chris-

tians, and has many times been expressed by them; but the church sophists, who are in the service of the authorities, have always known how to drown these voices, so that simple people have not seen this incompatibility and, continuing to call themselves Christians, have entered military service and have obeyed the authorities, which practised them in acts of murder, but the contradiction between the profession of Christianity and the participation in military matters has become more obvious with every day, and finally, in our day, when, on the one hand, the amicable communion and unity of the Christian nations is growing more and more intimate and, on the other, these same nations are more and more burdened with terrible armaments for mutually hostile purposes, it has reached the utmost degree of tension. Everybody speaks of peace, and peace is preached by the preachers and pastors in their churches, by the peace societies in their gatherings, by writers in newspapers and books, by representatives of the government—in their speeches, toasts, and all kinds of demonstrations. Everybody speaks and writes about peace, but nobody believes in it and nobody can believe in it, because these same preachers and pastors, who to-day preach against war, to-morrow bless the flags and cannon and, extolling the commanders, welcome their armies; the members of the peace societies, their orators and writers against war, as soon as their turns come, calmly enter the military caste and prepare themselves for murder; the emperors and kings, who yesterday solemnly assured all men that they are concerned only about peace, the next day exercise their troops for murder and boast to one another of their well-prepared multitudes armed for murder, and so the voices, raised amidst this universal lie, by men who actually want peace, and show not only in words, but also in their acts, that they really want it, cannot help but be heard. These people say: "We are Christians, and so we cannot agree to being mur-

derers. You may kill and torture us, but we will still refuse to be murderers, because that is contrary to that same Christianity which you profess."

These words are very simple and so little new that it seems strange to repeat them, and yet these words, enunciated in our time and under those conditions in which the Dukhobors are, have a great significance. These words again point out to the world that simple, indubitable, and only means for the establishment of actual peace which was long ago pointed out by Christ, but which has been so forgotten by men that they on all sides search for means for the establishment of peace, and have no recourse to the one, long familiar method, which is so simple that for its application nothing new has to be undertaken, but we need only stop doing what we always and for everybody consider to be bad and disgraceful,—if we stop being submissive slaves of those who prepare men for murder. Not only is this method simple,—it is also indubitable. Any other method for the establishment of peace may be doubtful, but not this one, with which men who profess Christianity recognize, what no one has ever doubted, that a Christian cannot be a murderer. And Christians need only recognize what they cannot help recognizing, and there will be eternal inviolable peace among all Christians. Not only is the method simple and indubitable,—it is also the only method for the establishment of peace among Christians. It is the only one, because, so long as Christians will recognize the possibility of their taking part in military service, so long will the armies be in the power of the governments; and so long as they shall be in the power of the governments, there will be wars. I know that this method was employed long ago: it was employed by the ancient Christians, who were for this executed by the Romans, and by the Paulicians, Bogomils, Quakers, Mennonites, and Nazarenes; but never before was this method em-



ployed so frequently, and, above all else, so consciously, as now in Austria, in Prussia, in Switzerland, in Holland, where even the pastors preach in the churches the refusal to do military service, and in Russia, where, for the period of three years, in spite of all its cunning, trickery, and cruelty, the government has been unable to break the determination of a small number of men who are living a Christian life.

To say that this method is ineffective, because, in spite of its having been long in use, the wars have existed at the same time, is the same as saying that in the spring the action of the sun is ineffective, because not all the earth has thawed and the flowers have not yet bloomed.

It is true that in Austria Nazarenes sit in prisons, that separate individuals who have refused to do military service are being tortured to death in disciplinary battalions, and that these same Dukhobors are locked up in jails, while their families die from want in places of deportation, and that the triumph seems to be on the side of violence. But just as in the spring, when the earth has not yet thawed out and the flowers have not yet bloomed, it is possible to see on whose side the victory is, so it is here.

The Dukhobors look upon their ruin, their want, imprisonment, and deportations as the work of serving God, and do this service with pride and joy, concealing nothing and fearing nothing, because nothing worse can be done to them unless they be put to death, which they do not fear.

But not such is the condition of the Russian government. If we, who are deceived by the government, do not see the whole significance of what the Dukhobors are doing, the government does see it; it not only sees the danger, but also the hopelessness of its position. It sees that as soon as people shall be freed from that spell under which they are now, and shall understand that a Chris-

tian cannot be a soldier, — and this they cannot help but understand, — and as soon as they hear what the Dukhobors did, the government will have inevitably to renounce, either Christianity, — and the governments rule in the name of Christianity, — or its power. The government is in relation to the Dukhobors in a desperate state. They cannot be left alone, for all the rest will do likewise; nor is it possible to destroy them, to lock them up for ever, as is done with individuals who interfere with the government — there are too many of them: the old men, wives, children, not only do not dissuade their fathers and husbands, but encourage them in their determination. What is to be done?

And so the government tries secretly, murderously, to destroy these men and to make them harmless, by keeping the men in solitary confinement, with the greatest secrecy, forbidding outsiders to commune with them, and by sending them to the most remote regions of Siberia, among the Yakuts; their families it deports among the Tartars and Georgians: it does not admit any one to them and forbids the printing of any information about the Dukhobors, and commands its accomplices to print all kinds of calumnies against them. But all these methods are inefficient. The light shineth in the dark. It is impossible at once to wipe off from the face of the earth a population of four thousand people who command the respect of all men; if they shall die out under the conditions in which they are placed, this extinction is slow, and extinction for the profession of the truth amidst other people is a most powerful sermon, and this sermon is being carried farther and farther. The government knows this and yet cannot help doing what it is doing; but we can already see on whose side is the victory.

It is this pointing out of the weakness of violence and of the power of truth which is in our time the great desert of the Dukhobors in the matter of the establishment of

peace. For this reason I think that no one has more than they served the cause of peace, and the unfortunate conditions under which their families are living (the details of which may be learned from an article printed in *Humanitas*) are the reason why the money which Nobel wished should be given to those who more than any one else served the cause of peace could not be adjudged to any one with greater justice than to these very Dukhobor families.

This ought to be done, and be done as quickly as possible, because the want of the Dukhobor families is growing and growing, and in winter will have reached its utmost limits. If this money should be adjudged to the Dukhobors, it can be sent directly to Tiflis or to those persons who will be named by me.

*Yásnaya Polyána, August 29, 1897.*

## AN APPEAL IN BEHALF OF THE DUKHOBORS

A POPULATION of twelve thousand men, the Christians of the Universal Brotherhood, as the Dukhobors now living in the Caucasus call themselves, are at the present time in a terrible plight.

Without entering into discussions as to who is right, whether the governments, which recognize the compatibility of Christianity with prisons, executions, and, above all, wars and preparations for them, or the Dukhobors, who recognize the obligatoriness for themselves of the Christian law, which denies every violence, and, moreover, every murder, and so refuse to do military service,—we cannot help but see that this contradiction is very hard to solve: no government can permit people to shirk duties which are fulfilled by everybody and thus to undermine the foundations of the state, while the Dukhobors, on their side, cannot reject a law which they consider divine and, therefore, obligatory in their lives.

So far the governments have found a way out from this contradiction, either by making those who from religious conviction refuse to do military service do harder duties than those of military service, but such as are not opposed to their religious convictions, as has been done in Russia in relation to the Menmonites (they are made to pass the time of military service in some work for the Crown); or, not recognizing the legality of the religious refusal, by punishing those who do not fulfil the common law of the state with imprisonment for the period of their service, as is being done with the Nazarenes in Austria. But the

present Russian government has used against the Dukhobors a third way out from this contradiction, which, it would seem, is no longer used in our time. It not only subjects the refusers to the most painful sufferings, but systematically causes also pain to the fathers, mothers, and children of those who refuse, in all probability intending with the tortures of these innocent families to shake the determination of their recalcitrant members. To say nothing of the floggings, incarceration, and all kinds of tortures, to which the Dukhobors have been subjected in the disciplinary battalions, from which many have died, and of their deportation to the worst places in Siberia; to say nothing of two hundred reservists, who for the period of two years pined away in prisons and now are separated from their families and are sent away in pairs to the wildest parts of the Caucasus, where, earning no livelihood, they literally starve to death, — to say nothing of these punishments meted out to those who are directly guilty of refusals to do military service, the families of the Dukhobors are systematically ruined and destroyed. They are all deprived of the right to absent themselves from their places of abode, and are specially fined and locked up in prisons for the non-fulfilment of the strangest demands of the authorities, — for not calling themselves by the names they are commanded to give themselves, for going to the mill, for visiting one's own mother, for going from the village to the wood, to collect fuel, — so that the last means of the once wealthy inhabitants are soon exhausted; and the four hundred families, who were deported from their homes and were settled in Tartar and in Georgian villages, where they have to hire themselves houses and support themselves by their own money, having no land and no income, are in such hard straits that in the course of the three years of their deportation one-fourth of them, especially their old men and children, have died from want and from diseases.

It is hard to believe that such a systematic annihilation of a whole population of twelve thousand people should enter into the plans of the Russian government. It is very likely that the higher authorities do not know what is going on in reality, or, if they guess it, do not wish to know the details, feeling that they cannot admit the continuation of such acts, while that is being done which they want to be done.

But it is incontestable that in the course of the last three years the authorities in the Caucasus have not only tormented those who refused, but also their families, and just as systematically have ruined all the Dukhobors and have starved to death those who have been deported.

All the interest in the Dukhobors and every aid sent to them have only brought about the expulsion from Russia of those who have attempted to help the Dukhobors. The government of the Caucasus has surrounded the whole recalcitrant population with a magic circle, and this population is slowly dying out. Three or four years more, and nothing will be left of these Dukhobors.

Thus it would be, if there had not happened an event which evidently was not foreseen by the authorities in the Caucasus. This event was this, that last year the dowager empress visited her son in the Caucasus, when the Dukhobors succeeded in handing her a petition, in which they asked to be permitted to emigrate in a body to some distant places, and if that could not be, to emigrate abroad. The empress transmitted the petition to the highest authorities, and the highest authorities found it possible to permit the Dukhobors to leave Russia.

It would seem that the question was solved and that a way out was found from a situation which was oppressive for both sides. But that only seemed so.

In the situation in which the Dukhobors now are, emigration is impossible for them: they have no means for this, and, being shut up in their places of deportation, they

are unable to attend to this matter. They were wealthy, but in the last years the greater part of their means has been taken from them by the courts and penalties and has been used up in the support of their deported brothers, and they have no way of discussing matters in common and settling upon the conditions of their emigration, since they are not allowed to leave their places of abode and no one is allowed to visit them.

The people are allowed to leave, but they have been previously ruined, so that they have no means for their journey, and the conditions under which they live are such that they are unable to find out anything about places to emigrate to, and how and under what conditions they can do so, and they are even unable to make use of outside help, since the men who want to help them are immediately expelled, while they are for every absence put in prison.

Thus, if these men shall receive no aid from without, they will be completely ruined and will all die out, in spite of the permission to emigrate.

I accidentally know the details of the persecutions and sufferings of these people and am in communication with them, and they ask me to help them, and so I consider it my duty to address all good people, both of Russian and of European society, asking them to help the Dukhobors to get out of that painful situation in which they now are. I have addressed an appeal to Russian society through a Russian newspaper,—I do not know yet whether my appeal will be printed or not, and I now address all the good people of the English and American nations, asking their aid, in the first place, in money, of which a great deal is needed for the transportation of ten thousand people for a long distance, and, in the second, by a direct guidance in the difficulties of the present emigration of people who do not know any languages and have never been outside of Russia.

I assume that the highest Russian authorities will not interfere with such aid and will temper the zeal of the government in the Caucasus, which now allows no communication with the Dukhobors.

Until then I offer my mediation between the people who wish to aid the Dukhobors and enter into relations with them, since my relations with them have so far never been interrupted.

My address: 21 Khamovnícheski Lane, Moscow.

*March 19, 1898.*



## LETTERS TO THE DUKHOBORS

### I. TO THE DUKHOBORS OF THE CAUCASUS

DEAR BROTHERS, who suffer for Christ's teaching:—

Our brother, I. P. N., called on me, on his way home, and I wanted to write to you that not I alone, but many, very many people in Russia and abroad know and think of you and are concerned about you. God willing, we will send you, your children, women, old men, and patients, such help as we can; but as to spiritual help, we and many others, both here and abroad, receive that from you, and we beg you not to forsake us with that help. This help consists in this, that you were the first to show an example of walking on Christ's road: it is easier for those in the rear than for those in the van. Christ said, "They have persecuted me, and they will persecute you," and so it is. I am sorry for the young and the old, and still more sorry for the persecutors: they know by this time that they are not persecuting you, but Christ, the one who came to save them. They see their sin, but are so deeply mired in it that they cannot get away from it. They do their evil work: God help them to come to their senses and to join us. I. P. told me how your brothers who suffer for their refusal to take part in the deeds of the devil, in murder, have acted toward those who have not withstood the persecutions and have consented to serve. If those who themselves suffer for Christ's sake begged forgiveness of those who did not withstand the persecutions for those sufferings which they bore at the instigation and instruction of their brothers, how must I, who

have not been made worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, ask the forgiveness of those to whom my words and writings have caused any suffering!

He who suffers for Christ's sake, not at the instigation of men, but because he cannot act differently before God, is in no need of human consolations and encouragements; but he who acts, not for God's sake, but for the sake of human glory, has a hard time and needs consolation and support, and his forgiveness has to be asked, if he suffers through us. And so, brothers, do not persist in your refusal to do service for the state, if you do so in order not to be accused of weakness. If you can do what is demanded of you, do it,—save thus your feeble, your wives and children, your sick, your old men, from sufferings. If Christ's spirit has not taken His abode in man, keeping him from doing what is contrary to God's will, every one of you ought, for the sake of the love of his own people, to renounce what he did before and submit: no one will condemn you for it. Thus you ought to act, if you can. But if Christ's spirit has taken His abode in a man, and he does not live for himself, but for the fulfilment of God's will, he would gladly do all he can for his suffering relatives, but he cannot do so, just as one man cannot lift forty hundredweights; and if this is so, Christ's spirit, which is opposed to the works of the devil, will teach him how to act, and will console him in his own sufferings and in those of his relatives.

I should like to tell you much and to find out much from you. If God wills it, we shall see each other. Meanwhile good-bye, brothers. I kiss you.

Your weak, but loving brother.

1897.

## II. TO THE DUKHOBORS IN CANADA

DEAR BROTHERS:—I send you the money collected. I think that it would be well for you to regard this money,

like all the other means which you receive from good people and working brothers, as your common possession, and not to divide it up among yourselves : give most to him who needs most. Your old people, together with your friends, will help you distribute it.

I have heard that you have suffered much want. God grant that you may bear your trials in the same Christian spirit of submission to God's will, in meekness and brotherly love, in which you lived in the Caucasus, showing people an example of Christian life. All worldly affairs — joys, and sorrows, and wealth, and poverty — pass, without leaving any trace ; but our deeds — the good or the bad — leave an eternal trace both in the world, aiding in the establishment of God's kingdom, or interfering with it, and in our souls, bringing it nearer to God, or removing it from Him.

God save you for your good.

Your loving brother.

*November 6, 1899.*

### III. TO THE DUKHOBORS IN CANADA

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS : — Those of us who profess the Christian teaching and want our life to harmonize with this teaching must help one another. The most necessary help is to point out to one another our sins, those sins and offences into which we fall without noticing them. For this reason I, too, asking my brothers to help me in my sins and offences, which I do not see, regard it as my duty to point out to you, dear brothers and sisters, the offence into which I hear some of you are falling.

You suffered and were exiled and even now suffer want, because you wished to lead a Christian life, not only in words, but also in acts, — because you refused to commit any violence against your neighbour, to swear to do police or military duty, — you even burned your weapons, that

you might not be tempted to defend yourselves with them, and, in spite of all the persecutions, you remained true to the Christian teaching. Your acts became known to men, and the enemies of the Christian teaching were confused when they heard of your acts, and either locked you up and deported you, or exiled you from Russia, trying in every way to conceal your acts from men. But the followers of the Christian teaching rejoiced, triumphed, loved and praised you, and tried to emulate you. Your acts have done much toward the destruction of the kingdom of evil and the confirmation of men in the Christian truth. Now I learn from the letters of our friends that the life of many of you in Canada is such that the very followers of the Christian teaching are confused, and its enemies rejoice and triumph. "Here are your Dukhobors," now say the enemies of Christianity, "the moment they settled in Canada, a free country, they began to live like all other people, hoarding property for themselves, and they not only do not share with their brothers, but even try to get as much as possible for themselves individually. Thus, whatever they did before, they did by command of their head men, without understanding well why they were doing so."

Dear brothers and sisters,—I know and understand the whole difficulty of your position in a strange country, amidst strange people, who do not give anything away for nothing, and I know how terrible it is to think that our friends, feeble people with families, will remain without means and without help. I know how hard it is to live in a commune, and how provoking it is to work for others, who are careless and waste what has been acquired by the labour of others. I know all that, but I know also this, that if you want to continue to live a Christian life and do not wish to renounce everything for which you suffered and were exiled from your country, you cannot live in a worldly way and collect property each for him-

self and for his family, and retain it separately from the rest. It only seems to us that it is possible to be a Christian and have property and retain it separately from the rest, but that is impossible. People need only recognize this, and very soon there will be nothing left of Christianity but words, and, unfortunately, nothing but insincere and hypocritical words. Christ said that it is impossible to serve God and mammon; one or the other: either you hoard property for yourselves, or you live for God. At first it seems that there is no connection between the rejection of violence, the refusal to do military service, and the recognition of property. "We, the Christians, do not worship external gods, do not swear, do not go to court, do not kill," say many of us, "but our acquiring property through labour, not for our enrichment, but as a provision for our near ones, not only does not violate Christ's teaching, but even helps us to fulfil it, if from the surplus we help the needy." But that is not so. Property means that that which I consider to be my own I will not only refuse to give to any one who may wish to take what is mine, but will also defend against him. But to defend what is mine from another, I must use violence, that is, in case of necessity, defend it by means of a struggle, a fight, even murder. If it were not for these acts of violence and of murder, no one would be able to retain property.

But if we retain property, without using violence, it is only so because our property is defended by the threat of using violence and by violence and murder itself, which are committed against people about us.

Our property is not taken from us, even if we do not defend it, only because it is assumed that we would defend it like any one else.

And so the recognition of property is the recognition of violence and murder, and you had no reason to refuse to do military and police service, if you recognize property,

which is maintained only by means of military and police service. Those who do military and police service and enjoy property do better than those who refuse to do military service and do not do it, and yet wish to enjoy property: such people do not serve themselves and want for their own advantage to make use of somebody else's service. The Christian teaching cannot be taken in small bits: either all or nothing. It is all inseparably connected into one whole. If a man recognizes himself as the son of God, from this recognition follows love of his neighbour, and from the love of his neighbour follows at once the rejection of violence, and of the oath, and of service, and of property.

Besides, the bias for property is in itself a deception, and Christ discloses it to us. He says that a man should not trouble himself for the morrow, not because there is any merit in it, or because God commands it, but because such a care leads to nothing, because it is impossible, and because he who will do so will be doing something foolish, since he will try to do the impossible. A man cannot make himself secure, in the first place, because he is mortal, as is shown in the Gospel parable about the rich man who built barns, and, in the second, because it is never possible to find the limit of the necessary security. For how long a time must we make ourselves secure? For a month? for a year? for ten years? for thirty? and shall we make ourselves alone secure, or also our children and grandchildren? and how? in food, or also in our apparel and habitation, and what apparel, and what habitation? He who will begin to provide for himself will never come to the end of his providing, and will only lose his life in vain, as it says: he that shall wish to keep his life shall lose it. Do we not see rich men who live in misery, and poor men who live joyously? Men do not need to provide for themselves, even as Christ has said that He is provided for by God

for all times, just as the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field are provided for.

“Yes, but if that is so, and people shall all stop working, ploughing, sowing, everybody will starve to death,” is generally said by those who do not understand Christ’s teaching in all its true significance. But that is only an excuse. Christ does not forbid a man to work, and not only does not advise us to be idle, but, on the contrary, commands us to work all the time; but we are not to work for ourselves, but for others. It says, The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and, He that laboureth is worthy of his meat. A man must work as much as possible; but he must retain nothing for himself, — he must not regard as his own what he has earned, but give it to others.

To provide for himself most securely, man needs one means, and this means is that which Christ teaches: to work as much as possible and to be satisfied with the least. A man who will act thus will everywhere and always be provided for.

The Christian teaching cannot be taken in small bits, — a part to be taken and the rest discarded. If men, accepting Christ’s teaching, have renounced violence and war, they must also renounce property, because violence and courts are needed only for the purpose of maintaining property. But if people retain property, they must have violence and courts and the whole worldly structure.

The offence of property is the most grievous offence, the harm of which is very cunningly concealed from men, and thus very many Christians have stumbled over this rock.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, in establishing your life in a strange country, after you have been expelled from your country for faithfulness to the Christian teaching, I see clearly that it is in every way more advantageous for you to continue to live a Christian life than to

change it and begin to live a worldly life. It is more advantageous for you to live and work in common with all those who shall wish to live the life you lead than for each of you to live separately, hoarding only for yourselves and your families, without sharing with the others. It is more advantageous to live so, in the first place, because, by not laying by for the future, you will not waste your strength in vain in providing for yourselves and your families, which is an impossibility for mortal man; in the second place, you will not waste your strength in a struggle with others, in order that each of you may retain his property distinct from his neighbours; thirdly, because you will work and earn incomparably more by working in common than if you worked in severalty; fourthly, because living in a commune, you will spend less on yourselves than living separately; fifthly, because living a Christian life, you will evoke in the people surrounding you love and respect, instead of envy and hostility, and they may even try to emulate you; sixthly, because you will not ruin the cause which you have begun and with which you confounded your enemies and pleased the friends of Christ. Above all else, it is more advantageous for you to live a Christian life, because, living such a life, you will know that you are doing the will of Him who sent you into the world.

I know, it is hard not to have anything of our own; it is hard to be prepared to give up what we have and need for the family to any one who may ask for it; it is hard to submit to the chosen leaders, when it seems that they are making an unjust distribution; it is hard to bear one another's faults; it is hard to abstain from the habits of luxury, meat, tobacco, wine. I know that all that seems hard. But, dear brothers and sisters, we live to-day and to-morrow we shall go to Him who sent us into this world, in order that we may do His work. Is it worth while, for the sake of calling things our own and being



able to manage matters, for the sake of a few puds of flour, a few dollars, fur coats, a pair of oxen, for the sake of not giving to those who do not work the things which we have earned, for the sake of a word of insult, for the sake of pride, for the sake of a dainty morsel, to go against the will of Him who sent us into the world, and not to do what He clearly wants us to do, and what we can fulfil only in this life? It is but very little that He wants of us, — that we should do unto others what we want for ourselves. And He wants this not for His own sake, but for our sake, because, if we all agreed to do so, we should all live as well as possible upon earth. But if even the whole world lived contrary to His will, no individual who understands why he is sent into this world has any cause to do anything else but that for which he is sent into this world.

To me, an old man on the brink of life and standing aside, this is clear; but even you, dear brothers and sisters, if you shall consider it calmly, casting aside for a time the temptations of the world, will see clearly that no man will lose anything, but each will only gain on all sides, if he shall live not for himself, but in order to do the will of God. It says, "Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Any man may verify the truth of it. But you have already verified it, and you know that it is the truth. As it is, we are seeking all these things, property, worldly pleasures, and we do not receive them, and we lose the kingdom of God.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, hold firmly to the life which you have begun, or you will uselessly lose what you had, and will not find what you seek. He who sent us into the world knows better than we what we need, and He has arranged the world in advance in such a way that we receive the highest good both in this and in the future life, not by doing our own will, but His.

I do not dare to give you any advice as to the way you have arranged your communal life, since I know that you, especially your old men, are experienced and wise in such matters. All I know is, that everything will be well, so long as each of you will remember that he did not come into this world by his own will, but by the will of God, who sent him into this short life for the fulfilment of His will. But His will is all expressed in the commandment of love. But to collect property individually and to retain it separately from the rest means to act contrary to the will of God and His commandment.

Good-bye.

Your loving brother.

*February 15, 1900.*

## LETTER TO NICHOLAS II.

YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY : — The enclosed letter, which was received by me from Canada, is so brief, so touching, so eloquent in its simplicity, and at the same time deals with such an important subject, that I beg you very much to read it yourself and alone, and to surrender yourself to those good sentiments which this letter will no doubt evoke in your good heart.

Nine young women, who are living at liberty and in good circumstances, and two old mothers ask you as a special favour to be permitted to abandon their free and secure condition and to emigrate to the most terrible place of exile and under the most oppressive conditions. What moral and strong people these men and women must be, if, after all those sufferings to which they have been subjected, they are not thinking of themselves, but of one another, of being true to the marital law. How much these people must have suffered for one another in these six years of their separation !

And it is not these people alone who are suffering : tens, if not hundreds of thousands of the best Russian people are suffering as much, if not more, from religious persecutions, which, by some strange misunderstanding, continue to exist and of late have even been intensified in Russia, when all enlightened men and governments have long ago recognized the silliness, the cruel injustice, and, above all, the aimlessness of such persecutions.

I long ago wished to tell you about those terrible and stupid cruelties which, under the guise of defending the

state religion, are perpetrated in your name. My advanced years and the nearness of my death urge me not to delay any longer. Thousands and thousands of truly religious, and so of the best, men, who form the strength of any nation, have already perished or are now perishing in prisons, in hard exile, or are sent out of Russia. The flower of the population, not only of the Caucasus, but also of Russia, eight thousand Dukhobors, have for ever left their country, and not only have no regrets about it, but even think of it with disgust and terror, thanks to those cruelties to which they have been subjected in it. A few thousand Milkers from the Kára Territory and Eriván Government (whose petitions to be permitted to emigrate from Russia I have sent you), the Milkers from Tashként, tens of thousands in the Governments of Khárkov, Kíev, Poltáva, Ekaterinosláv, who are oppressed on account of their religion, ask for nothing but that they be permitted to leave their country and go where they may without molestation profess God as they understand Him, and not as is demanded by the authorities, who for the most part do not recognize any God. Knowing that all this is being done in your name (and you cannot help but know this; if you do not know it, let a truthful man investigate it, and he will confirm my words to you), and knowing that you are able to put a stop to it, you will not find any peace of mind, until you do so.

Your advisers, those same men who have started these persecutions and guide them, will tell you that it is impossible to stop this, that I am a Utopian, an anarchist, an atheist, and that no attention ought to be paid to me. But do not believe them.

What I say, I do not say from my standpoint, but from the standpoint of a rational and enlightened government. And from this standpoint it has long ago been proved that all religious persecutions not only lower the prestige of the government, deprive the government of

the people's love, and do not attain the aim for which it is founded, but even produce the opposite effect.

And so it has long been time, in the first place, to review and destroy the existing laws about persecution for religion's sake; in the second place, to stop all persecutions for departing from the profession of faith adopted by the state; in the third place, to free all men who on the basis of previous laws were deported and exiled for crimes against religion, and, in the fourth place, not to punish as a crime the disagreement of the religious consciousness with the demands of the government, but to try to harmonize this contradiction, as it is harmonized in court in case of a refusal to take the oath by promising to tell the truth, or as it has been harmonized in the case of the Mennonites in their refusal to do military service, by substituting for it obligatory, non-military labour.

By doing so you will not only relieve yourself of a heavy responsibility, which is resting upon you, but you will also feel the joy of the consciousness of having done a good deed.

May God help you to do what pleases Him.

Your loving

LEV TOLSTÓY.

*December 7, 1900.*



THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION  
AND INSTRUCTION

From Letters and Diaries

1887-1901





# THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION

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## I.

THE religious conception of life is the foundation of every human life. Mau's whole life is arranged on the basis of religion, and all his activity is directed upon it, and so it is clear that education, that is, the preparation of men for life and activity, ought to be based on religion.

But with us, in our so-called civilized world, religion is not only not acknowledged as important and necessary among other subjects, but is also regarded as one of the last, most unnecessary subjects, which, as a survival of antiquity (in which no one believes seriously), for the sake of decency, is somehow taught in the schools. Naturally education under such conditions cannot be rational, but is perverse, and, speaking of education, we have to begin from the beginning.

At the base of everything ought to be religious teaching, such as would agree with the degree of men's enlightenment, without any distinction of nationalities and conditions.

As such religious teaching obviously can serve neither Catholicism, nor Orthodoxy, nor Protestantism, nor Mohammedanism, nor Judaism, nor Buddhism, which are all based on faith in certain prophets, but only a teaching

which is justified by reason, by the sincere striving and experience of every man. And such a teaching is the Christian teaching in its simplest and most rational expression.

The religious basis of life consists in this, that our life has no other meaning than the fulfilment of the will of that infinite Principle, of which we recognize ourselves to be a part; but the will of this principle is the union of everything living, which for men expresses itself first of all in their brotherhood among themselves, in their ministration to one another.

But the union and the ministration to one another form the meaning and work of life, because such is the will of that Principle which rules and guides the world and forms the basis of our existence.

The whole activity of education ought not only to be based on this foundation, but also to be guided by it: everything which in education contributes to the union of the beings, the brotherhood of men, ought to be encouraged; but everything which disunites them ought, on the contrary, to be removed. Everything which contributes to this end more freely ought to be put first, and everything which contributes to it less freely ought to come later.

Now what is education, and in what does it consist?

To answer this question precisely, it is necessary from a certain side to determine the properties of human activity in general.

The property of every human activity is such that, — the psychiatrists know this well, — if a man is in the condition of hypnosis or idiocy, that is, if he has no internal motives for his activity, he submits to the first suggestion which acts upon him, for the most part in the form of imitating what he sees, or repeating what he has done: he is told to walk, and he will walk and will continue to move his legs against the wall, as though he were walk-

ing. A spoon is carried up to his mouth, and he will keep carrying a spoon to his mouth, until he is stopped. Thus act hypnotized persons or idiots; but also all sensible people have this property of submitting to the suggestion of another man or to their own. Repeat some word and be thinking of something else or have your attention diverted, and you will unconsciously be repeating the same word. The same is true of acts. This property, which presents itself as so pitiable in the idiot, is a very important and indispensable property in men. If a man were to think of every act of his, he would not be able to abandon himself to the trend of his thoughts and to solve questions of science and of life. This ability to submit to another man's suggestion or to his own gives him the ability to think.

Every one of us does but a small part of his acts consciously, and acts according to his own suggestion or according to a suggestion from another person. The stronger a man is, the less he submits to a foreign suggestion and the more he follows his own, and vice versa. And so, in addition to a man's greater or lesser inborn spiritual strength, the older he is, the less he submits to foreign influences, and the younger he is, the more sensitive he is to foreign suggestions.

On this property of men education is based.

This ability to receive suggestions turns the children over into the full power of their elders, and so it is clear of what importance it is for the children to be subjected, not to false and bad, but to true and good, suggestions.

Everything of which the education of the children is composed, — from prayers, fables, mathematics, dances, to the valuation of other people's acts and of their own, recognizing some as good and others as bad, — all that is transmitted by means of suggestion.

Conscious suggestion is what is called culture; unconscious suggestion is what, in the narrower sense, is called

education, which I will call enlightenment, in contradistinction from the general conception of education, which includes both influences.

All efforts are in our society directed upon culture, but enlightenment is, in consequence of the fact that our life is bad, that is, unenlightened, necessarily neglected.

Educators either — what is most common — conceal their lives and the lives of adults in general from the children, by putting them under exceptional conditions (military schools, institutes, and so forth), or transfer what ought to take place unconsciously into the sphere of the conscious, — they prescribe religious moral precepts, with which it is necessary to add: "*Fais ce que je dis, mais ne fais pas ce que je fais.*" From this results the phenomenon that culture has in our society advanced immeasurably far, while true enlightenment has not only receded, but is even entirely lacking. If at all, it may be found in poor labourers' families, when the members of these families are not subject to the vices that are peculiar to poverty. But of the two different influences upon children, the unconscious and the conscious, the first, that is, the unconscious, moral enlightenment, is incomparably more important both for separate individuals and for society.

The family of a stockholder, landowner, official, or even artist, or writer, living a bourgeois life, without drinking, without dissipation, without quarrelling, without offending people, and considering itself to be moral, wishes to give its children a moral education, but, in spite of its sincere wish and endeavour, such an education will never be successful. It will not be, because the immorality of the life led by this family, by not using in a brotherly way the extorted labours of other men, an immorality which is not perceptible to the adults, who are used to it, offends the pure children and corrupts their ideas of what is good. The children will

hear rules about morality, about respecting men, but unconsciously they will not only imitate, but also make their own the rule that one set of men are called to get their boots and clothes dirty, and another — to clean them, some — to prepare food, and others — to eat it, and so forth. To inculcate upon children who live in such surroundings a true idea of morality is as impossible as to educate to temperance a child that sees everybody around him drinking and is himself given wine to drink. The child feels the sequence and intrinsic weight of virtue and sees clearly — what his elders no longer see — that the brotherhood of men is the foundation of all virtue. But if this brotherhood is violated, when for money, which the others have not, they tear his nurse and chambermaid away from their families, making them serve him, a stranger's child, he dimly, but incontestably, decides that all the other virtues are not needed, and no longer believes in anything.

No religious or moral sermons will free the children of people, who live on money taken away from others and cause others to serve them, from the unconscious immoral suggestion, which remains with them all their lives, corrupting all their judgments concerning the phenomena of life.

Thus, in order that the most important, the unconscious suggestion, that is education, may be good and moral, it is necessary — it sounds strange to say so — that the life of the educators should be good. And it is not to be good, incidentally good, in certain details, but its foundations are to be good. The most unblemished life of murderers living on the fruits of their murders cannot produce any moral influence upon the children who are educated in their midst.

But you will ask: "What shall we call a good life?"

There are infinite degrees of goodness, but there is one common and chief feature of a good life, — it is the striv-

ing after perfection in love. If this exists in the educators, and the children are infected by it, education will not be bad.

For the education of children to be successful, the educators must continue to educate themselves and aid one another more and more to realize that toward which they are striving. There may be very many means for that, besides the chief internal means,—the labour of every man over his own soul. These means have to be found, worked out, applied, discussed. I believe that the criticism which is employed by the perfectionists is good. . . . It is good, I think, to try to find most unfortunate men, who are physically and morally repulsive, and to try and serve them. It is good, I think, to try to cultivate the acquaintance of our enemies who hate us. I write this at haphazard, *au courant de la plume*; but I think that this is a whole, most important sphere of science which is entirely neglected in our time and which is necessary for education. If we only recognized the importance of this side of education, we would work it out. (These are hints for one side of the work of education.)

So this is in general outlines what I think about education. And these are not general reflections, which remain nothing but reflections. If we recognize the justice of this, we shall certainly try with united forces to work out the practical methods of this constant perfecting of the educators, which is so necessary for the cause of education.

These methods exist, and we need only bring them together; but, in addition to this, if we shall only agree to it that this is a most important science, we shall be able to find the means for establishing and developing it.

So much about education.

Now about culture.

This is what I think of culture: culture, or science in

general, learning, is nothing but the transmission of what the wisest and best men have thought and expressed in the various branches of knowledge. Now wise and good men have always thought and expressed their thoughts in three different directions:

(1) In the philosophico-religious direction, — about the meaning of life in general and our own life (religion and philosophy).

(2) In the experimental direction, by drawing conclusions under given conditions (the natural sciences, mechanics, physics, chemistry, physiology).

(3) In the logical direction, by drawing conclusions from the propositions of our thought (mathematics and the mathematical sciences).

All these three kinds of science satisfy the criterion of the brotherhood of men, — they are all cosmopolitan and accessible for all men, and they are all real sciences, — such as you cannot pretend in, such as do not admit of half-knowledge, — you either know, or you do not know.

But all the sciences which do not answer these demands, such as the theological, juridical, and special historical sciences, are harmful and should be excluded.

Not only are there three branches of sciences, — there are also three methods for their transmission.

The first method, the most customary, is that of transmitting by word of mouth, in various languages, and so there appears a new science, — the languages, — again in correspondence with the criterion of the brotherhood of men. (Maybe there would also be a need of teaching Esperanto, if time permitted and the pupils so wished.)

The second method is that of plastic art, drawing, modelling, — the science of how by means of sight to transmit to another what you know.

The third method is music, singing, — the science of transmitting your mood, your sentiment.

Besides these six branches of instruction there ought

to be also introduced a seventh, — the instruction of handicraft, which again answers the criterion of brotherhood, that is, such as all need, — carpentry, cabinet work, sewing.

Thus the instruction divides into seven subjects. What amount of time is to be used for each of these, in addition to the obligatory labour for one's work upon oneself, will be determined by the inclination of every individual pupil.

This is the way I think of it: the instructors arrange the hours for their own convenience, but the pupils are free to come or not.

However strange this may seem to us, who have so distorted education, full liberty of study, that is, the permission given to the pupil to come to study when he wishes, is a *conditio sine qua non* of every fruitful instruction, just as it is a *conditio sine qua non* of nutrition that he who feeds should feel like eating. The only difference is this, that in material matters the harmfulness of a departure from freedom will show itself at once, — there will at once be vomiting or disorder of the stomach, — while in spiritual matters the harmful consequences will not appear so soon, maybe only in years.

Only with complete freedom can the best pupils be brought to the limits which they can reach, and not be kept back for the sake of the weak pupils, and it is these best pupils that are needed most. Only with freedom can we avoid the usual phenomenon, — the dislike for subjects which in their proper time and with freedom of instruction would be liked; only under freedom is it possible to determine for what specialty a pupil has an inclination; it is only freedom that does not impair the educative influence. Or else I shall be telling the pupil that violence must not be used in life, and shall be exerting most grievous mental violence against him. I know that this is difficult; but what is to be done



when you come to understand that every departure from freedom is pernicious for the cause of education itself? But then, it is not so hard, if you fully make up your mind not to do anything foolish. I think it ought to be like this: A gives from two to three o'clock a lesson in mathematics, that is, teaches what the pupil wants to know in this field. B—from three to five o'clock, drawing, and so forth. You will say: "And the youngest?" The youngest, if things are run correctly, always themselves ask for and love accuracy, that is, submit to the hypnosis of imitation: there was a lesson yesterday after dinner, and so he wants a lesson to-day after dinner.

In general, the distribution of time and subjects presents itself to me like this: There are in all sixteen hours of waking. Half of these, with pauses for rest and play (the younger, the longer), I propose for education, in the narrower sense of enlightenment, that is, for work for themselves, their families, and others: cleaning up, carrying, cooking, chopping, etc.

The other half I give to study. I leave the pupil to choose among seven subjects what attracts him. All this, you see, is written at haphazard. God demanding, I will work all this out.

I want to add that I should not advise starting anything new, such as going to another place, or some theoretical predetermination what the school should be; nor should I advise inviting teachers or pupils, but I should advise making use of present conditions, developing the rest, or, rather, letting the rest develop itself.

I will add also something about drawing and music. Piano instruction is a flagrant example of falsely put education. As in drawing, so in music, the children should be taught, by always making use of the most accessible means (in drawing, by means of chalk, crayon; pencil; in music, by means of their throats, to be able

to render what they see and hear). This is a beginning. If afterward — which is a pity — exceptional pupils should develop especial gifts, they may learn to paint with oil-colours and to play on expensive instruments.

I know that there are good, new manuals for teaching this elementary science of drawing and music.

As for the study of languages — the more the better — I think, French and German ought to be taught by all means, and English and Esperanto, if possible. They should be taught by giving them to read a book they know in Russian, trying to make them understand the general sense, here and there paying attention to the most important words, the roots of words, and grammatical forms.

*1901.*

## II.

I HAVE thought a great deal about education. There are questions as to which one arrives at doubtful conclusions, and others as to which the conclusions arrived at are final, and we feel ourselves incapable of either changing them or adding anything to them. They are the following.

Education presents itself as a complex and difficult matter, only so long as we wish, without educating ourselves, to educate our children or any one else. But if we come to understand that we can educate others only through ourselves the question of education is made void, and only the question of life is left, "How must I live myself?" because I do not know a single act in the education of children, which is not included in the education of oneself. How shall we dress, feed, put to bed, and teach children? Just as we do ourselves. If the father and mother dress, eat, sleep with moderation, and work, and study, the children will do the same.

I would give two rules for education: not only live well yourself, but work over yourself, perfecting yourself all the time, and conceal nothing about your life from your children. It is better for the children to know of the weak sides of their parents than that they should feel that their parents have a life which is concealed from them, and another for show. All the difficulties of education arise from this, that the parents, far from mending their faults, or even recognizing them as faults, justify them in themselves and do not want to see these faults

in their children. In this does the whole difficulty and the whole struggle with the children consist. Children are morally much more acute than adults, and they — frequently without saying so or even being conscious of it — see not only the faults of their parents, but even the worst of all faults, their hypocrisy, and so lose respect for them and interest in all their instructions.

The parents' hypocrisy in the education of their children is a most customary phenomenon, and children are sensitive and immediately notice it, and turn away and become corrupt. Truth is the first, most important condition of the actuality of spiritual influence, and so it is a first condition of education. That it may not be terrible to show the children the whole truth of the parents' life, it is necessary for the parents to make their life good, or, at least, less bad. And so the education of others is included in the education of oneself, and nothing else is needed.

Education is the exertion of influence upon the heart of those whom we educate. But we can exert an influence upon the heart only by means of hypnotization, to which children are so subject, — by the infectiousness of the example. The child sees that I am irritated and insult people, that I make others do what I can do myself, that I pamper my greed, my lusts, that I avoid work for others and seek only for pleasures, that I am proud and vain of my position, that I speak ill of others, that I do not say the same thing of a man behind his back that I say to his face, that I pretend to believe in what I do not believe in, and thousands and thousands of such acts, or the opposite acts, such as spring from meekness, humility, industry, self-sacrifice, abstinence, truthfulness, — and he is infected by either a hundred times more powerfully than by the most eloquent and sensible of instructions. And so all or nine hundred and

ninety-nine thousandths of education reduces itself to the example, the correction and perfection of our life.

So that, what we began with within ourselves, when we dreamed of an ideal, that is, of the good, the attainment of which is possible only within ourselves, is what we are brought to now in the external education of children. What we wished for ourselves, without knowing well why we wanted it, is now indispensably needed by us, in order that we may not corrupt our children.

Of education we generally demand too much and too little. It is impossible to demand that the pupils to be educated should learn this or that, should become cultured, — as we understand culture, — and it is equally impossible for them to become moral, as we understand the word. But it is quite possible for us not to be participants in the corruption of the children (and in this a husband cannot interfere with his wife, nor a wife with her husband), but with our whole life and to the best of our ability to act upon them, infecting them with the example of goodness.

I think that it is not only difficult, but even impossible, to educate children well, if we are ourselves bad, and that the education of children is only self-perfection, which is not aided by anything so much as by children. How ridiculous are the demands of people who smoke, drink, eat immoderately, do not work, and turn night into day, that the doctor should make them well, in spite of their unhealthy mode of life! Just as ridiculous are the demands of people that they be taught how, continuing to lead an immoral life, they may be able to give their children a moral education. All education consists in a greater and ever greater consciousness of our own errors and in our mending them. This anybody can do under all possible conditions of life. This is the most powerful tool given to man for the purpose of acting upon other men, among them upon his children, who are always

involuntarily nearest of all to him. *Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra* refers most of all to education.

I spoke yesterday about education. Why do parents send their children away from home to a gymnasium? It suddenly became clear to me.

If the parents kept them at home, they would see the consequences of their immoral lives in their children. They would see themselves in their children as in a mirror. The father drinks wine at dinner with his friends, and his son is in a saloon. The father is at a ball, and his son is at an evening entertainment. The father does nothing, and so the son does nothing. But send him to the gymnasium, and the mirror in which the parents see themselves is veiled.

Living a corrupt, inabstemious, idle life, disrespectful of other people, the parents always demand of their children abstinence, activity, respect for people. But the language of life, of the example, is heard and seen from afar, and is clear to the old and the young, to our own and to strangers.

The thing is that, whether for the external success of the matter a loving (and not a violent) treatment of the pupils is advantageous or not, you cannot treat them differently. The one thing which may be said for certain is, that the good awakens the good in the hearts of men and certainly produces this action, even though it is not visible.

One such drama, that you will go away from your pupils, that you will weep (if they find it out), will leave in the hearts of the pupils greater, more important traces than hundreds of lessons.

Terrible is the corruption of the mind to which, for personal purposes, the authorities subject the children

during their education. The reign of conscious materialism is explained only by this. Such nonsense is impressed upon a child, that afterward the materialistic, limited, false comprehension, which is not carried to its conclusions, of those who arraign the incorrectness of the comprehension presents itself as a vast acquisition of reason.

Every man lives only for the purpose of manifesting his individuality.

Education (the education of the present) wipes it out.

They were talking to-day about a boy with vicious inclinations, who was driven out of school, and that it would be well to send him to a school of correction.

It is precisely the same that is done by a man who lives a bad, unwholesome life, and who, when he is overtaken by disease, turns to the doctor to be cured by him and does not even consider that his disease is a beneficent indicator for him that his whole life is bad and that it ought to be changed.

The same is true of the diseases of our society. Every sick member of this society reminds us of the fact that the whole life of society is irregular and that it ought to be changed, but we imagine that for every such a sick member there is and ought to be an institution which would free us from this member or which would even correct him.

Nothing hinders so much the forward movement of humanity as this false conviction. The sicker society is, the more there are institutions for the cure of symptoms, and the less care is there for the change of the whole life.

It is terrible to look at what the rich people do with their children.

When one of them is young and foolish and impas-

sioned, he is drawn into a life which is lived upon the backs of other people, is taught this life, and then, when he is tied hand and foot by temptations, — when he cannot live otherwise than demanding for himself the work of others, — his eyes are opened (the eyes open themselves), and — get out the best way you can: either become a martyr, renouncing everything you are used to and cannot live without, or be a liar.

Children are good for this reason also, that they have no business and are only concerned about passing the day well. It is thus that they ought to be educated; but we hasten to teach them business, that is, instead of the eternal work before God and their conscience, to do the work which is established by certain people by agreement as play.

If I had to choose, — to people the earth with such saints as I am at all able to imagine, but with no children, or with such people as we have nowadays, but with constantly new accretions of children fresh from God, — I would choose the latter.

One needs but busy oneself with education in order to see one's shortcomings. If you see them, you begin to mend them. And mending oneself is the best means for educating one's own and other people's children and grown people.

I have just read N——'s letter in which he says that medical help does not present itself to him as something good, that the continuation of many useless lives for many hundreds of years is much less important than the feeblest blowing upon the spark of divine love in the heart of another. In this blowing lies the whole art of education. But to fan it in others, we must first fan it in ourselves.



The teacher complained that A—— is a poor pupil, because he cannot explain in words and write out an arithmetical problem. I said that the demand for an explanation is a demand for a senseless memorizing,—the boy has comprehended, but is not yet able to find words. He agreed with me, and said: “Yes, we teachers are obliged to make the pupils learn by heart the very form. For example, we teach that every discussion of a problem must begin with the word *if*.” If I were told that this is the way they taught in Japan one thousand years ago, I should have hardly believed it; but this is done among us by the fresh fruits of the university.

The word is one of the most natural, most widely diffused, and easiest ways for the transmission of thought. Unfortunately it is also the most deceptive, and so in education, where deception is most dangerous and the deception is always very easily discovered by the children, the most effective and best means, which excludes the possibility of deception, often involuntary deception, has always been and always will be the personal example of the educator’s life. . . . The person’s example and life includes also the word. The example teaches how to live and speak. But the word does not include the example.

To educate well, we must live well before those whom we educate. And so we must be as pure and truthful as possible also in relation to the question of sexual intercourse: if we consider sexual intercourse a sin and live chastely, it is possible for us and necessary to preach chastity to the children; if we strive after chastity, without attaining it, we should tell the children so. But if we live unchastely and cannot and will not live otherwise, we shall involuntarily conceal this from the children and shall not tell them so. Even so people do.

The children say : " The parents say that their children torment them ; if they only knew how the parents torment their children : coquetry, and quarrels, and meanness, and inequality of love, and injustice, and all the vices of those who in the opinion of the children ought to be faultless."

I have constantly occasion to interpret upwards now this, now that, utterance of the Gospel. Thus I just now esteem more especially the hint as to the sanctity of the children and as to our terrible sin of offending them, when, without noticing it, we make concessions, compromise with our soul, and do not repent, but even justify ourselves.

If we should make it our problem to mix up a man, so that he might not be able with his common sense to get away from the two opposite world-conceptions inculcated upon him since childhood, nothing more powerful could be invented than what is done to every young man who is educated in our so-called Christian society. On one side he is taught to weigh and verify everything critically, to take nothing on faith, and is shown how the superstitions of antiquity slowly melt before the light of science, how everything which a man knows must be based on reason, and side by side with that he is offered a faith which not only has no explanations whatever, but even offers an explanation the foundation of which, like the dogma of the Trinity and others, directly contradicts reason.

Public education, such as it is with us, is directly and very artfully organized for the moral corruption of the children. And so I think it right to make all possible sacrifices so as not to subject the children to this corrupting influence. But with the present arrangement of the

schools there is even no need of making great sacrifices, since the instruction in the schools is so bad that cultured parents can give more information in much shorter time. All this I say in cases where the parents are at one.

Our life, to be full, must by all means have two sides: the fulfilment of life itself for our own sake, and the influence upon people, — for the change of their false life, — the sermon.

You have both sides. I say and think, and people think of me, that I have an influence upon people by means of my preaching: they print and read me in all languages. But you have children who will take your whole soul into their hearts, will acquire all the thoughts of the best quality, and will for ever carry them into the world, transmitting them to others.

My activity is a loud one, and, therefore, external and doubtful, but yours — upon your children — is quiet, invisible, underground, but irrepressible, eternal, unquestionable, and invaluable. Only look upon them religiously; remember that they are living divine looms, out of which you cannot chop with an axe what you have put into them. God has deprived me of this activity.

. . . The majority of men, not only removed from you, but even near to you in convictions, will not understand your life, will even condemn it; but the children who have grown up with you, if only they always move in an atmosphere of love, will understand you, and in them you will get your reward. Only give them as much liberty and enlightenment as possible, of course, not gymnasium, but Christian enlightenment. I do not know how to do all that, because I have not experienced it myself, but I see the importance and significance of the whole matter. I see that it is more important to send into the world one live man than hundreds of books.

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Education, the transmission of knowledge, is real when it transmits the important, necessary contents (moral instruction) in a clear, rational, comprehensible form (science), and so that it charms, infects, attracts by its sincerity him to whom it is transmitted (art).

But with us the moral religious instruction is transmitted without clearness and without sincerity, — our religious instruction; science without moral contents is again given separately; and art, — nothing but attractiveness, — again separately.

I cannot rejoice in the birth of children of the wealthy classes, — they breed drones.

Every child of the well-to-do classes is by his very education put in the position of a rascal who by means of a dishonourable life is to provide himself with at least five hundred roubles per year.

At first I thought that the ability to learn was a sign of dulness, a paradox, but I really did not believe it, because I myself did not study well; but now I am convinced that it is the truth and that it cannot be otherwise. In order to receive other people's ideas one must not have any of one's own.

Somnambulists learn best of all.

It has for a long time been my opinion that, as it is not only useless, but even harmful, to fill the stomach which does not demand any food, so it is useless and always harmful to transmit knowledge by force, and not for the purpose of satisfying the demands of the learner. This opinion long ago became an undoubted truth to me, and I am glad to find this fundamental truth in Schultz's teaching.

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It is impossible to imagine anything more terrible than those crimes which are committed in these dens (the military institutions of learning). Here, in these places, are not only confirmed all these horrors, tortures, murders, robberies, which are committed in the world, but directly, in the most impudent manner and systematically, the souls of all adolescent young men are ruined.

Is female education good? Yes. Are the university lectures good? No. Why? Because, like any school, they put men in a condition which is most susceptible of hypnosis. The true, not injurious education every man acquires by himself, that is, not by himself, but with the aid of God.

There are three pedagogical branches, because there are three kinds of reasoning: (1) the logical, (2) the experimental, (3) the artistic. The sciences, study, are nothing but the acquisition of what wise men thought before us. Wise men have always thought in these three ways: they either made logical deductions from the propositions of thought; or they observed, and, segregating the phenomenon under observation from all the rest, made their deductions as to the causes and results of the phenomena; or they described what they saw, knew, and imagined. More briefly: (1) they thought, (2) observed, and (3) expressed. And so there are three kinds of sciences: (1) the mathematical, (2) the experimental, and (3) the languages.

### III.

. . . WHEN I received your letter, I immediately decided that I would try in the best way possible to answer your first question, which is of prime importance and which has interested me without cessation; but various causes have so far kept me back, and I am only now able to satisfy your wish and mine.

From the time — beginning twenty years ago — that I came to see clearly how humanity must and should live happily, and how senselessly, tormenting itself, it ruins generation after generation, I kept removing farther and farther the radical cause of this madness and this ruin: at first I found this cause in the false economic structure, then in governmental violence, which maintains this order; but now I have come to the conclusion that the fundamental cause of everything is to be found in the false religious doctrine, which is inculcated by means of education.

We have become so used to the religious lie which surrounds us that we do not observe all the horror, stupidity, and cruelty with which the ecclesiastic doctrine is filled. We need only understand clearly what we are doing when we teach our children the so-called law of God, to become frightened at the terrible crime which is committed by such instruction. A pure, innocent, still undeceived and still not deceiving boy comes to us, men of years, who possess or may possess all the knowledge which in our time is accessible to humanity, and asks for those principles by which a man is to be guided in

this life. What do we tell him? Frequently we do not even answer, but only put aside his question, so that he may have a prepared inspired answer, when the question shall arise. We answer his questions with a gross, incoherent, often stupid, and, above all, cruel Jewish legend, which we give him in the original or, still worse, in our own words. We tell him, impressing it upon him as a sacred truth, what we know could not have happened and what has no meaning for us, namely, that six thousand years ago a strange, wild being, whom we call God, took it into His head to create the world, and actually created it and also man; that man sinned, the evil God punished him and all of us for this, then redeemed us from Himself by the death of His son, and that our chief business consists in propitiating this God and freeing ourselves from those sufferings to which He has doomed us. It seems to us that that is all right and is even useful for the child, and we listen in delight as he repeats all these horrors, without considering that terrible transformation, which is unnoticeable to us because it is spiritual and which is taking place in the child's soul. We think that the child's soul is a *tabula rasa*, on which anything we please may be written. But that is not so: the child has a dim conception of what is the beginning of everything, that cause of his existence, that force, in whose power he is, and he has the same high, indefinite, and inexpressible conception, cognized by his whole being, of the beginning, which is proper for all rational men. Suddenly he is told instead that this beginning is nothing but some personal, conceited, terribly evil being, — the Jewish God. The child has a dim and correct idea of the purpose of this life, which he sees in happiness, attainable in a communion of love. Instead of this he is told that the general purpose of life is the will of the conceited God, and that the personal aim of every man is liberation from eternal punishments and torments, deserved by somebody,

which God has imposed upon all men. Every child has also the consciousness of the fact that man's obligations are very complex and lie in the moral sphere. Instead of this he is told that his obligations lie chiefly in blind faith, in prayers,—in the enunciation of certain words at a certain time, in the swallowing of a sop of wine and bread, which is supposed to represent God's blood and body, to say nothing of the images, miracles, immoral Bible stories, which are represented as model acts, or of the Gospel miracles and the whole immoral significance which is ascribed to the Gospel history. It is as though some one should form a complete doctrine out of the cycle of Russian bylínas, with Dobrynya, Dyuk, and others, with the addition to them of Eruslán Lázarevich, and should give this to his children as rational history. It seems to us that this is not important, and yet this instruction in the so-called law of God, which with us is given to our children, is the most terrible crime which can be imagined. Torture, murder, violence committed upon the children would be nothing in comparison with this crime.

The government, the rulers, the ruling classes, need this deception; with it their power is inseparably connected, and so the ruling classes always want this deception to be practised upon the children and maintained over the adults by means of an increased hypnotization; but the people who do not wish for the maintenance of the false social order, but, on the contrary, for its change, and who, above all else, wish for the good of those children with whom they enter into communion, must with all their strength try to save their children from this terrible deception. And so a complete indifference of the children to religious questions and the rejection of all religious forms is still incomparably better than the Judæo-ecclesiastic instruction, even though in the most perfected forms. It seems to me that for every man who has come to understand the whole significance of the trans-



mission of the false doctrine as sacred history there cannot even be any question as to what he should do, though he may not have any positive religious convictions to transmit to his child. If I know that a deception is a deception, I can under no condition tell the child, who asks me naïvely and confidently, that what I know as a deception is sacred history. It would be better if I could answer truthfully all those questions which the church answers in such a lying way; but if I am not able to do so, I must still abstain from giving out a certain lie as the truth, being confident that nothing but good can come from my sticking to the truth. Besides, it is not true that a man has nothing to tell his child but the positive religious truth which he professes. Every sincere man knows that good, in the name of which he lives. Let him tell that to his child, or life will show it to him, and he will do well and will certainly not do the child any harm. I wrote a little book, called *The Christian Teaching*, in which I wanted to say in the simplest and clearest form what I believe. If I had just now to give to a child the essence of the religious teaching which I consider the truth, I should tell him that we came into this world and live in it, not by our will, but by the will of that which we call God, and that, therefore, we shall fare well only when we shall do this will. But this will consists in this, that we all should be happy. For all of us to be happy there exists but one means: every one of us must act toward others as he would have others act toward him. In reply to the questions as to how the world originated and what awaits us after death, I should answer the first with a confession of my ignorance and the incorrectness of the question (in the whole Buddhist world this question does not exist); the second I should answer with the assumption that the will of Him who called us into this world for our good leads us somewhere through death, no doubt for the same purpose.

*December 13, 1899.*



LETTERS TO VARIOUS  
PERSONS

1886-1903



# LETTERS TO VARIOUS PERSONS

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## LETTER TO A REVOLUTIONIST

By long and hard experience I have come to the conclusion that it is useless to argue with people who do not see what they cannot help seeing, because such people are not guided in their reflections by the search after truth, but by the defence of their position, their past and present. To argue with such people is the same as arguing with a builder who has erected a house, in which he has put all his pride and his life, and, finding that his angles are not right, does not want to know or see that a right angle is one-half of a straight angle.

He wants the angle which he has built as a right angle to be right, and so he, a clever and serious man, will not and cannot understand the properties of a right angle. The same is true of the retorts which I constantly hear against the indubitable and obvious moral truth of non-resistance to evil, which are raised from two mutually hostile sides, — by the governmental conservatives and by the revolutionists.

One side began to build an obtuse angle, the other for the same reason began to build an acute angle. Both sides are angry at one another, and still more at the L

square, which shows them that they are both wrong. You are defending against obviousness and yourselves the angle which you have started, and which does not agree with the right angle, which you know well. And so I am not going to prove to you what you know as well as I do; but I will ask you for a moment to doubt that everything you have done was precisely what ought to have been done, and that what you intend to do is what ought to be, and from this abstract standpoint to look, say, at the arguments of your letter and their clear and direct purpose.

Your arguments reduce themselves to this, that a man, in the name of the love of men, may and should kill men, because there exist considerations, mysterious to me or else very incomprehensible, in the name of which men have always killed one another, the same by which Caiaphas found it more advantageous to kill Christ only than to ruin the whole nation. The purpose of all these arguments is the justification of murder. You even seem to be indignant, because there are some people who assert that it is never right to kill, just as I found people who were indignant over people who asserted that it was not right to beat women and children.

Humanity lives, the moral consciousness grows in it, at first reaching a point when it sees the moral impossibility of eating one's own parents, then of killing the superfluous children, then of killing captives, then of holding slaves, then of making the members of the family mind by beating them, and then — one of the chief acquisitions of humanity — the impossibility of attaining the aggregate good by means of murder, and in general by means of violence. There are people who have reached this stage of the moral consciousness, and there are people who have not reached it. There is nothing to dispute or argue about. No matter how conclusively it may be proved to me that I shall attain a higher good

for my children and for all of humanity if I teach my children by means of a whip, I shall not be able to do so, just as I cannot kill. All I know is that, just as I cannot fight and beat children, I cannot kill. There is nothing to discuss about. All I can say is, that those who want to defend violence, and especially murder, must not speak of love, just as people who want to prove that the acute angle of their building is a right one must not speak of the perpendicularity of the sides, because, by asserting this, they refute themselves. If we talk at all of love, no examples of robbers will ever lead up to the necessity of killing another, but only to the simplest and most inevitable deduction from love, — to this, that a man will with his body defend another, will give his life for another, but will not take the life of another.

I did not have any intention of arguing, but I seem to have begun to argue. All right, let it be. Your letter not only interested me, but even touched me: under the thick bark (pardon me) of your superstitions I saw a serious mind and a good heart, and I should like fraternally to share with you the conception of life which gives me the good.

You say beautifully that the fundamental commandment is the commandment of love, but you are wrong when you state that all private commandments may impair it. You are here incorrectly confusing two different things, — the commandment not to eat pork and, say, the commandment not to kill. The first may be in disagreement with love, because it has not love for its object. But the second is only an expression of that degree of consciousness which humanity has reached in the definition of love. Love is a very dangerous word. You know that in the name of love for the family very bad acts are committed, in the name of love of country worse ones still, and in the name of love of humanity the most terrible horrors. It has long been known that love gives

the meaning of life, but in what does love consist? This question has continuously been solved by the wisdom of humanity, and always in a negative sense: it turns out that what incorrectly was called and passed under the form of love was not love. To kill people is not love, to torture and beat them in the name of something, to prefer one class to another, is also not love. And the commandment about not resisting evil with violence is a commandment which points out the limit where the activity of love ends. In this matter it is possible to go ahead, but not back, as you wish to do.

Here is a remarkable thing: you, who recognize that the meaning of life is in serving others in the name of love, murmur, because the safe and undoubted path of this service has been pointed out to you, just as though a man should murmur because the correct channel has been determined amidst shoals and submarine rocks. "Why must I be embarrassed? Maybe I shall have to run aground on a shoal." Are you not saying the same, when you are provoked, because it is not right to kill a robber who is supposed to have killed some one? "But if it cannot be otherwise?" Well, if it cannot be otherwise than settling on a shoal? "Maybe I will settle on a shoal, but I cannot help but rejoice at having the path, and I cannot help but wish with all my strength to walk upon it."

You adduce the comparison that the rule about not resisting evil is like the rule about not throwing children out of the window, when such may become a necessity, and from this you conclude that the proposition that it is not right to throw children out of a window is incorrect. It is only he who needs to torture children in general, who is concerned in an activity where this necessity presents itself all the time, that will insist that it is not right to prohibit one from throwing children out of a window, because such a necessity may arise at a fire. Pardon



me, but this is so in our present case. And it is this that is so terrible. You, who are unquestionably a clever man, are going directly against common sense, and, though unquestionably a good and self-sacrificing person, you defend violence and murder.

Violence and murder provoked you, and you were carried away by a natural sentiment, let us say, and began to oppose violence and murder to violence and murder. Such an activity, though closely resembling that of an animal, and being irrational, has nothing senseless or contradictory about it; but the moment the governments or the revolutionists want to justify such activity on rational grounds, there appears the terrifying silliness and the inevitable heaping of sophisms, in order that the stupidity of such an attempt may not be seen. Justifications of this kind are always based on the assumption of that imaginary robber who has in himself nothing that is human, who kills and tortures innocent people, and this imaginary beast, which is constantly in the process of killing the innocent, serves as a foundation for the reflections of all the violators as to the necessity of violence; but such a robber is a most exceptional and rare and even impossible case; many persons may live hundreds of years, as I have lived sixty, without ever running across this fictitious robber in the process of committing his crime. Why should I base my rule of life on this fiction?

When we discuss real life, and not a fiction, we see something quite different: we see people, and even ourselves, perpetrating the most cruel deeds, in the first place not alone, like the fictitious robber, but always in connection with other men, and not because we are beasts, who have nothing that is human, but because we abide in error and in offences. More than that: when we reflect upon life, we see, on the contrary, that the most cruel deeds, like the slaughter of men, dynamite, the gallows,

guillotines, solitary cells, property, courts, power and all its consequences, all have their origin, not in the fictitious robber, but in those men who base their rules of life on the silly fiction of the imaginary beast of a robber. Thus a man who is reflecting upon life cannot help but see that the cause of people's evil does in no way lie in the fictitious robber, but in our own errors and in the errors of others, one of the most cruel of which consists in this, that in the name of the fictitious evil an actual evil is committed, and so such a man, who has directed his activity on the cause of evil, on the eradication of error in himself and in others, and who has devoted his strength to this, will see before himself such a vast and fruitful activity that he will absolutely fail to see what his activity has to do with the fiction of the robber, with whom he will in all probability never fall in. And if he shall, he will in all probability do something quite different from what he will do who, having never seen the robber, bears him a grudge.

Now I beg you to forgive me, if I have written you anything that is blunt, and to try to understand me, where I have not expressed myself precisely; above all, to believe me that I had but one incitement in writing you this letter, — love and respect for you, and the desire to be useful to you.

Your loving

1886 (?).

LEV TOLSTÓY.

## ON NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL

YOUR letter gave me much pleasure. What you think about non-resistance to evil is quite correct, as you yourself know. It is at times sad to think that our society is in such deep darkness that it takes great efforts — such as you have made and but few are capable of — in order, on the one hand, to tear oneself away from the nets of formal, false Christianity, and on the other, from the revolutionary liberalism which controls the press, and to understand the simplest truths, such as that two times two are four, in the moral sphere, that is, that we ought not to do the same evil against which we fight. All this apparently complicated proposition about non-resistance to evil and the objection to it reduce themselves to this, that, instead of understanding it, as it is written, “Do not resist evil or violence with evil or violence,” they understand (I even think, intentionally) that it says, “Do not resist evil, that is, be indulgent to evil, be indifferent to it;” whereas to resist evil, to struggle against it, is the only external problem of Christianity, and the rule about non-resistance to evil is given as a rule how to struggle in the most successful manner against evil. It says “You are in the habit of struggling against evil by means of violence, or of retribution. This is a bad, a wicked, means. The best means is not to repay except with good.” It is as though a man should try to push a door inward, when it opens outward, and another, knowing about it, should say, “Do not push, but pull.” But this is so only in our backward cultured society. In

America, for example, this question was worked out from all sides fifty years ago, and it is a shame to talk of it, as though we should have to prove the system of Copernicus to those who deny it, just as Galileo was denied. Thus, on the one hand, I say, I sometimes feel ashamed of our ignorance, and on the other, I see the use of it. He who, like yourself, with his own mind pierces this bark of lies and ignorance, has the earnest of a firmer comprehension of everything connected with this proposition than he for whom it has all been masticated and put into his mouth.

There is, however, one thing in which you are not right, and that is, that you are too timid to follow your reflection in regard to the madmen. In thought not the slightest compromise can be admitted. There will inevitably be a compromise in practice (as you say correctly), and so we must much less admit it in theory. If I want to draw a line which is mathematically approximately straight, I cannot for a second admit that a straight line may not be the shortest distance between two points. If I admit that a madman may be locked up, I must also admit that he may be killed. Why should he suffer? Take the example of a mad dog: we certainly lock it up and kill it.

If I admit that a dangerous madman may be locked up, it will seem possible and even necessary to somebody to have us locked up. And do not be afraid, as you are, of thinking in this direction. If it be right to lock him up, there will be that violence which now causes the world to groan: in Russia there are one hundred thousand prisoners; and if it is not right, what makes it so terrible? Is it that the madman will kill me, you, my daughter, your mother? What is there about it that is terrible? We all may and certainly will die. But we ought not to do any evil. In the first place, madmen rarely kill, and if they do, the subject to be pitied, to be

helped, is not I, who only may be killed, but he, who is certainly distorted and suffering; I must aid him, think of him. If people did not take the liberty for the sake of their safety to lock up and kill those madmen and so-called criminals, they would see to it that no new madmen and criminals be created. As it is, I know of a case of a wild man, a mendicant of forty-five years of age, who tramped with his daughter and did not stay winter nights in houses, and committed rape on his daughter; another case of a boy of eleven years of age, who killed his five-year-old sister and made a candle from her fat, that all the locks during his burglaries might open; a third case of a pupil of my school, who was given into apprenticeship, was taught to drink by his companions, drank until he got a brain disease, was sent to an insane asylum, to relieve his family and those about him, and there died. We all know the Skublinski woman. They will all be sentenced, then they will be locked up, so that they shall not interfere with our producing the like, and then we say that it would be cruel to leave them at large. No, if they were at large, we should have no savages walking under the telephone wires, no boys making candles from their sister's fat, no savages drinking themselves into madness, no Skublinski women.

I shall be very glad to read what you wrote about my story (the *Kreutzer Sonata*). The other day I wrote for it an epilogue, which it seemed necessary to write, because people so boldly pretended that they did not understand what was written there.

God help you to walk on the path on which you are now: it is the only one.

1890.

## TWO LETTERS ON HENRY GEORGE

### 1

IN reply to your letter I hasten with the greatest pleasure to say the following:

I have known Henry George ever since the appearance of his *Social Problems*. I read the book and was struck by the correctness of his fundamental idea, and also by the exceptional clearness, popularity, and force of expression, the like of which cannot be found in scientific literature, and especially by that Christian spirit, also exceptional in scientific literature, with which the whole book is permeated. After reading this book, I went back in time and read his *Progress and Poverty* and still more appreciated the significance of Henry George's activity.

You ask for my opinion concerning Henry George's activity and his single-tax system. My opinion concerning these is as follows:

Humanity is all the time moving forward in the sense of elucidating its consciousness and establishing forms of life to correspond to this changing consciousness. And so at every period of humanity's life there is taking place, on the one hand, the process of the elucidation of the consciousness, and, on the other, of the realization in life of what has been elucidated by the consciousness.

At the end of the last and the beginning of the present century there has been taking place in the Christian humanity the process of the elucidation of consciousness as regards the labouring class, which was in various

aspects of slavery, and the process of the establishment of new forms of life to correspond to the elucidated consciousness, — the abolition of slavery and the substitution of free hired labour for it. At the present time there is taking place the process of the elucidation of consciousness in relation to the use of the land, and very soon, it seems to me, there must come the process of the realization of this consciousness in life.

In this very process, both of the elucidation of the consciousness in relation to the use of the land, and also of the realization of this consciousness, which forms one of the chief problems of our time, Henry George has been the leader and guide of the movement. In this does his vast and prime importance consist. With his beautiful books he has contributed to the elucidation of men's consciousness concerning this question and to placing it on a practical basis.

But with the abolition of the revolting right to the ownership of land there is repeated precisely what in my memory took place with the abolition of slavery. The governments and the ruling classes, knowing that with the land question is connected their advantageous and prominent position in society, make it appear that they are concerned about the people's welfare and establish working men's banks, inspections, income taxes, and even an eight-hour day, but carefully ignore the land question, and with the aid of their subservient science, which proves everything they want, assert that the expropriation of the land is useless, harmful, impossible. Precisely the same is repeated as in the case of slavery. The men of the beginning of the present and the end of the last century for a long time felt that slavery was a terrible anachronism, which was revolting to the heart; but the quasi-religion and science proved that there was nothing bad in slavery, that it was necessary, or, at least, that it was still untimely to abolish it. Now the same is repeated

in relation to the ownership of land. The quasi-religion and quasi-science prove in the same way that there is nothing bad in the ownership of land and that there is no need whatever of abolishing it.

It would seem that it ought to be clear to every cultured man of our time that the exclusive right to the land held by men who do not work it and who deprive hundreds and thousands of needy families of access to it, is just as bad and mean a business as the ownership of slaves; and yet we see cultured, refined aristocrats, English, Austrian, Prussian, Russian, who make use of this cruel and mean right, and not only are not ashamed of it, but even boast of it. Religion blesses such a possession, and the science of political economy proves that this must be so for the greatest good of men.

Henry George deserves credit not only for having shattered those sophisms by means of which religion and science justify the ownership of land, and to have carried the question to the highest degree of clearness, where it is impossible not to recognize the illegality of ownership of land, except by closing one's ears, but also in this, that he was the first to indicate the possibility of solving this question. He was the first to give a clear and direct answer to those customary objections made by the enemies of any progress, which are that the demands of progress are impractical, inapplicable dreams.

Henry George's project destroys this objection, by putting the question in such a way that to-morrow committees may be assembled for investigation and discussion of the project and for its transformation into a law. In Russia, for example, the discussion of the question of the purchase of the land, or of its seizure without any payment, for the purpose of its nationalization, may be begun to-morrow, and the question may in various circuitous ways be solved exactly as thirty-three years ago was solved the question of the liberation of the peasants.



The people have been shown the necessity of changing the situation, and the possibility of it has been shown to them (there may be changes and corrections in the system of the single tax, but the fundamental idea is practicable), and so they cannot help doing what their reason demands of them. All that is necessary is for this idea to become public opinion; for it to become public opinion, it is necessary to diffuse and elucidate it, — exactly what you are doing, and in that I sympathize with you with all my heart and wish you success.

## 2

Henry George's project consists in this:

The advantages and conveniences of the use of land are not everywhere the same; and since for more fertile, convenient tracts, which are close to well-settled places, there will always be many who will want them, — and the more there are who want them the better and more advantageous the tracts are, — it is necessary to estimate the value of all such tracts in accordance with the advantages which they offer: the more advantageous, higher, the less advantageous, lower. But such land as is not desired by many is not to be valued at all, and is to be left gratuitously to those who want to work it personally.

With such a valuation of the land it will happen, for example with us, in the Government of Tula, that field-land will be valued at about five or six roubles per desyatína, garden-land near settlements at about ten roubles per desyatína, meadow-land at about fifteen roubles, and so forth. But in the city the desyatína will be valued at one hundred and at five hundred roubles, and in Moscow and St. Petersburg, in a busy place, and near the harbours of navigable streams, as high as thousands and tens of thousands of roubles per desyatína.

Having thus valued the land in the whole country, Henry George proposes to announce a law that, beginning with such a year and day, the land will not belong to any one in particular, but to the whole country, the whole nation, and that, therefore, every one who owns land must pay the country for it, that is, must pay to the whole nation as much as it has been valued at. This income is to be used for all public works of the state, so that it will take the place of all the taxes and all domestic and foreign customs revenues. From this project it would follow that a landed proprietor who now owns two thousand desyatínas might continue to own them, but would have to pay to the treasury, in Tula Government, between twelve and fifteen thousand per year, because there would be in the estate meadow and field land, and not one proprietor would be able to make such payments, and they would refuse to hold the land. But a Tula peasant in the same locality would pay about two roubles less per desyatína than what he is paying now, and he would always have free land about him, which he could take at five or six roubles, and, besides, he would have to pay no other taxes, and would get all commodities, whether domestic or foreign, without paying any dues. In the cities the owners of houses and factories might continue to own their properties, but would have to pay into the common treasury for the land occupied by them to the extent to which it is valued.

The advantage of such an arrangement will consist in this:

(1) That there will be no men who are deprived of the possibility of using land.

(2) That there will be no idle men, who own land and compel others to work for the right to use the land.

(3) That the land will be in the hands of those who work it, and not of those who do not work.

(4) That the people, having the possibility of working the land, will no longer sell themselves into slavery in

the factories and plants, and as servants in the cities, but will scatter in the country.

(5) That there will be no inspectors and collectors of taxes in factories, establishments, and custom-houses, but only rent-collectors for the land, which cannot be stolen and from which it is very easy to collect the rent.

And (6) above all else, that the people who do not work will be free from the sin of exploiting somebody else's labour, for which they are frequently not to blame, since they have been brought up in idleness from childhood and do not know how to work, and from the still greater sin of every lie and subterfuge for justifying themselves in this sin; and that the working people will be freed from the offence and sin of envy and malice toward the people of leisure, and of condemnation of them, and that one of the causes of the division of men will be destroyed.

1893 (?).

## LETTER TO A POLE

MARIAN ÉDMUNDOVICH : — I have received your letter and have hastened to read your article in the *Northern Messenger*. Thank you very much for having pointed it out to me. The article is beautiful, and I learned from it much that is new and a joy to me. I learned also about Mickiewicz and Towianski. I used to ascribe their religious mood to the qualities which these two people alone possessed, but from your article I learned that they were only the originators of the true Christian movement, which, having been evoked by patriotism, continues until the present time, and is profoundly touching in its exaltation and sincerity.

My article, *Patriotism and Christianity*, called forth very many retorts. Philosophers and publicists, Russian, French, German, Austrian, retorted to me, and so do you. And all the retorts, like yours, reduce themselves to this, that my condemnations of patriotism are just only in relation to bad patriotism, but have no foundation, if referred to good and useful patriotism; but in what this good and useful patriotism consists and in what way it differs from the bad patriotism, no one has so far taken the trouble to explain.

You write in your letter that "besides the patriotism of conquest and of the hatred of man, characteristic of the powerful nations, there exists also an entirely different patriotism of the enslaved nations, who are striving after the defence of their native faith and tongue against the enemy." You define good patriotism by this condition

of oppression. But oppression or the power of the nations does not make any difference in the essence of what is called patriotism. A fire will always be a burning and dangerous fire, whether it burns in a pyre or glows in a match. By patriotism is generally understood a preferential love for one's own nation, just as by egoism is understood a preferential love for one's own personality. It is hard to imagine how such a preference of one nation over another can be considered a good, and so a desirable, quality. If you say that patriotism is more excusable in an oppressed person than in the oppressor, just as the manifestation of egoism is more excusable in a man who is being strangled than in one who is not troubled by any one, it will not be possible not to agree with you; but patriotism cannot change its quality, according to whether it is manifested in the oppressed man or in the oppressor. This quality, — the preference of one nation over all the others, — like egoism, can never be good.

But patriotism is not only a bad quality, — it is also an irrational doctrine.

By the word "patriotism" is meant not only an immediate, involuntary love of one's nation and preference of it over all the others, but also the doctrine that such a love and preference are good and useful. Such a doctrine is particularly irrational among the Christian nations.

It is irrational, not only because it contradicts the fundamental meaning of Christ's teaching, but also because Christianity, attaining in its own way all that toward which patriotism is striving, makes patriotism superfluous, unnecessary, and interfering, like a lamp in daylight.

A man who, like Krasinski, believes that "God's church is not this or that place, not this or that rite, but the whole planet, and all imaginable relations of individuals and nations among themselves," can no longer be a patriot, because he will in the name of Christianity perform all those things which patriotism can ask of him. Patriotism,

for example, asks of its disciple that he sacrifice his life for the good of his countrymen ; but Christianity demands a similar sacrifice of one's life for the good of all men, and so such a sacrifice is so much more natural for the men of one's own nation.

You write of those terrible acts of violence which the savage, stupid, and cruel Russian authorities are perpetrating on the faith and language of the Poles, and this you adduce as some kind of a reason for a patriotic activity. But I do not see it. To be indignant at such acts of violence and to counteract them with our whole might, we need not be a Pole or a patriot, but only a Christian.

In the given case, for example, I, who am not a Pole, will vie with any Pole as to the degree of my disgust and indignation on account of the savage and stupid measures of the people connected with the government, which are practised against the faith and language of the Poles ; I will also vie with any one in the desire to counteract these measures, not because I love Catholicism more than any other religion, or the Polish language more than any other, but because I try to be a Christian. And so, to prevent these things from happening in Poland, or in Alsace, or in Bohemia, we do not need the diffusion of patriotism, but the diffusion of true Christianity.

We can say that we do not care to know Christianity, and then we can laud patriotism ; but the moment we recognize Christianity, or even the consciousness of the equality of men and the respect for human dignity which arise from it, there is no place left for patriotism. What surprises me more than anything else in connection with it, is this, how it is that the advocates of patriotism in the oppressed nation, no matter how perfect and refined they may take it to be, do not see how harmful patriotism is for their own purposes.

In the name of what have all these acts of violence been perpetrated on language and faith in Poland, the

Baltic Provinces, Alsace, Bohemia, against the Jews in Russia, wherever such acts have been committed? — Only in the name of that patriotism which you defend.

Ask our savage Russifiers of Poland and of the Baltic Provinces, and the persecutors of the Jews, why they do all that they do? They will tell you that this is done for the defence of their own faith and language; they will tell you that, if they do not do so, they will cause their own faith and language to suffer, — the Russians will turn Poles, Germans, Jews.

If there existed no doctrine as to patriotism being something good, there would never exist, at the end of the nineteenth century, men so base as to have courage to do all the base things which they are doing now.

But now the learned — the most savage persecutor of faith in your country is an ex-professor — have a point of support in patriotism. They know history, they know about all those useless horrors of the persecutions of language and faith, but thanks to the doctrine about patriotism, they have a justification.

Patriotism gives them a point of support, while Christianity takes it away from under their feet. And so the conquered nations, which are suffering from oppression, must destroy patriotism, tear down its theoretical foundations, ridicule it, and not extol it.

In defending patriotism, people speak of the individuality of the nationalities, saying that patriotism has for its aim the salvation of the individuality of the nation, and the individuality of the nations is assumed as an indispensable condition of progress. But, in the first place, who has said that this individuality is an indispensable condition of progress? This has not been proved in any way, and we have no right to accept this arbitrary proposition as an axiom. In the second place, even if we admit that this is so, the nation's means for manifesting its individuality will not consist in trying to manifest it,

but, on the contrary, in forgetting its individuality and employing all its forces to do what it feels itself most competent to do and most destined for, just as the individual man will manifest his individuality, not by caring for it, but by forgetting it and employing all his forces and abilities in doing that toward which he is drawn by his nature. It is the same as that people who are working for the support of their community should be doing all kinds of work in all kinds of places. Let each do what is most necessary for the community, according to the best of his strength and knowledge, and let him work with all his might, and they will all involuntarily work differently with different instruments and in different places.

One of the most common of the sophisms which are used for the defence of what is immoral consists in intentionally confusing what is with what ought to be, and in beginning to speak of one thing and then substituting another for it. This sophism is most frequently employed in relation to patriotism. It is this, that a Pole is nearer and dearer than any one else to a Pole, a German to a German, a Russian to a Russian. We have also this, that in consequence of historical causes and bad education, the men of one nation experience unconsciously ill-will toward the people of another nation. All this exists, but the recognition of what exists, like the recognition of the fact that every man loves himself more than any one else, can nowise prove that this must be so. On the contrary: the whole work of all humanity and of every individual man consists only in suppressing these predilections and ill-wills, in struggling against them, and in acting consciously toward other nations and toward the people of other nations just as one would act in relation to his countrymen. It is quite superfluous for us to trouble ourselves about patriotism, as about a feeling which it is desirable to educate in every man. God, or Nature, has



without us taken care of this feeling so that it is inherent in every man, and we have no need to trouble ourselves about educating it in ourselves and in others. What we ought to trouble ourselves about is not patriotism, but how to introduce into life the light which is within us, and thus to change it and bring it nearer to the ideal which stands before us. This ideal, which at the present time is standing before every man, who is enlightened with the true light of Christ, does not consist in the reëstablishment of Poland, Bohemia, Ireland, Armenia, and not in the preservation of the unity and greatness of Russia, England, Germany, Austria, but, on the contrary, in the destruction of this unity and greatness of Russia, England, and Germany, in the abolition of all those force-using, anti-Christian combinations, called states, which are in the way of all true progress and beget the sufferings of the oppressed and vanquished nations,—all that evil, from which modern humanity is suffering. This destruction is possible only through real enlightenment, through the recognition that, before being Russians, Poles, Germans, we are men, disciples of the same teacher, the sons of the same father, brothers among ourselves,—and this was understood by the best representatives of the Polish people, as you have beautifully shown in your article. And this is from day to day understood by an ever greater number of men.

Thus the days of governmental violence are counted, and the liberation of not only the conquered nations, but also of the oppressed labourers is near, if we ourselves are not going to defer the time of this liberation by participating in words and deeds in the governments' acts of violence. But the recognition of patriotism, no matter of what kind, as a good quality, and the incitement of the nation to it, are among the chief impediments in the attainment of the ideals which are standing before us.

I thank you once more for your kind letter, and the

excellent article, and for the opportunity which you gave me once more to verify, think out, and express my ideas on patriotism. Accept the assurance of my respect.

*September 10, 1895.*

## RELATION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EXISTING ORDER

### 1

(From a private letter, 1896)

THE existing order of life is subject to destruction. This is admitted both by those who strive to destroy it and those who defend it.

The competitive order is to be destroyed and to give way to the communistic; the capitalistic order is to be destroyed and to give way to the socialistic; the order of militarism is to be destroyed and to give way to disarmament and arbitration; the separatism of the narrow nationality is to be destroyed and to give way to cosmopolitanism and a universal brotherhood; all religious superstitions are to be destroyed and to give way to a rational religious, moral consciousness; every kind of despotism is to be destroyed and to give way to liberty; in short, violence is to be destroyed and to give way to a free and loving union of men.

So far two means have been employed for the attainment of all these ends, — the first, the violent revolutions, the overthrow of the men who supported the undesirable order, and the substitution of others, who were to establish a new, desirable order of life; and the other, which, without destroying the existing order, and entering into the ranks of the government, consists in slowly and by degrees obtaining that change of the existing order which is demanded by the human consciousness of our time.

The first method does not attain its end, because, in the first place, every violent destruction of the existing order evokes in the majority of indifferent people a reaction, a desire at all costs to retain the existing order, and even the one which existed before, when there were no perturbations, and so it calls forth a reaction, which only removes the attainment of the end. In the second place, because the men who enter into the power, while retaining the old governmental machine of violence, very soon become just as despotic, sometimes even more despotic than those which are overthrown. (The reaction of the great French Revolution against the despotism of the royal power, the Napoleonic reaction and that of the year '15, the reactions after the years '30, '48, and '81 in Russia, and now the reaction after the anarchistic explosions and murders in France.)

The second method, which consists in changing the government, by taking part in it and improving it, still less attains its end, because not only the men who enter into the ranks of the government without the aim of a gradual improvement of the existing order, but also those who recognize the government and enjoy the advantages of the government only in order to be able to modify and improve it, imperceptibly to themselves, very soon and inevitably (because their whole life is based on governmental violence) become, not only no correctors and changers of the government's violence, but even the most ardent defenders of the same. It is the same as though a man who undertakes to mend a boat should sit down in it and row.

In the course of several generations men, having come to see the falseness of their situation, have been trying to change it, now with one means, and now with another, but neither means produces any effect, and the situation is growing worse and worse.

There exists one means for the attainment of this end, — a very simple and natural means, which consists in

leaving the state and the government alone and not thinking of them, but in thinking only of our life, in elucidating to ourselves the end and significance of our life, and in leading our life in conformity with the elucidated consciousness. And, strange to say, this means — which entirely leaves out the questions about state, government, society — is the only one which solves (and in the most incontestable manner at that) all the political, governmental, and social questions.

This means, in relation to the political, governmental, and social questions, consists, instead of forcibly destroying the existing order of life, or, with the desire to destroy or change it, building our life upon it, in the simplest kind of a method, which, it would seem, would be the first to occur to people, — namely, in taking no part in that violence-using structure of life which we deny and wish to change.

In order not to take part in this violence-using and false structure of life, we must (1) clearly understand the meaning and destiny of our life, (2) clearly understand what in our life corresponds to the destiny of our life, and (3) know those means with which it is possible for us to harmonize our life with the demands of our consciousness.

## 2

(From the diary of 1895)

The situation of the majority of men, enlightened with a true enlightenment of brotherly love, who are now suppressed by the deceit and cunning of the violators, through their compelling this majority to ruin itself, is terrible and seems hopeless.

Only two ways out present themselves, and both are closed: one consists in rending violence by means of violence, terrorism, dynamite bombs, daggers, as did our nihilists and anarchists, — outside of us to break up that

plot of the governments against the nations ; or to enter into a concerted action with the government, making concessions to it, and, taking part in it, slowly to disentangle the net which binds the nation, and to free it. Both ways out are closed.

Dynamite and the dagger, as experience shows us, only provoke reaction, impair the most precious force, — the only one which is in our power, — public opinion.

The other way out is closed because the governments have already found out to what extent the participation of people wishing to transform it should be admitted. They allow only that which does not impair the essentials, and are very sensitive in regard to what is detrimental for them, — they are sensitive, because their existence is at stake. They admit people who do not agree with them and who wish to reform the governments, not only in order to satisfy the demands of these people, but for their own sakes, for the sake of the governments. These people would be dangerous to the governments if they were left outside the governments and rose against them, by influencing the only, most powerful governmental instrument, — public opinion, — and so they have to make these men harmless, attract them by means of concessions, made by the government, — they must make them harmless, something like the microbe cultures, — and then only use them for the purpose of serving the government's ends, that is, for the purpose of oppressing and exploiting the masses.

Both ways out are solidly and impermeably closed. What is left ?

It is impossible to break open a way with violence, — you only increase the reaction ; equally impossible it is to enter the ranks of the government, — one becomes a tool of the government. One thing is left, — to struggle against the government with the instrument of thought, of words, of acts, — of life, without making any conces-

sions to it, without entering its ranks, without increasing its force through us.

This one thing is necessary and will certainly be successful. And God wants it, and Christ taught it.

### 3

(From the diary of 1895)

We have come to such a pass that a simply good and sensible man cannot be a partaker in the government, that is, cannot be one — I am not speaking of Russia — cannot in England be one with the landownership, the exploitation of the factories and capitalists, the orders in India, the flogging, the opium trade, the annihilation of nationalities in Africa, the preparations for war, and the wars themselves.

And the point of support, when a man says, "I do not know anything about the government, and I do not care to know; but I know that I cannot live contrary to my conscience," — that point of view is imperturbable, and upon it ought all the men of our time to stand, in order to move life forward. "I know what my conscience commands me to do, but you, people who are busy with the government, arrange the government as you wish, so that it may correspond to the demands of the conscience of the people of our time."

Meanwhile the people occupy the standpoint of the correction and improvement of the governmental forms, and thus, by recognizing the necessity of the government, lose their imperturbable point of support.

## LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE

DEAR SIR : — I write to you, as man to man, with a feeling of respect and good-will, which I ask you to show also to my letter. Comprehension and agreement are possible only when these sentiments are sincere.

What I have in mind is the persecutions to which the officers of your ministry subject such persons as have my writings which are prohibited in Russia, and give them to read to those who ask for them. So far as I know, many different persons have been subjected to such persecutions. One of the latest cases was that of a lady physician, Mrs. N——, of Túla, who was searched and put in jail, and now is under trial before the investigating magistrate, being accused of spreading my writings.

This case of Mrs. N——, who is no longer a young woman, and is of feeble health, extremely nervous, and highly respectable as regards her spiritual qualities, which have earned her the love of all those who know her, is particularly striking.

So far as I know, this is what served as the cause of it : Mrs. N—— is a good acquaintance of mine and a friend of my daughters. A Túla labourer wrote to me several times, asking me to give him my work, *My Religion*, to read. As I did not have a copy of it to spare and did not know the man, I left several of his letters unanswered. When this winter I again received a letter from him, asking for the same, I turned the letter over to my daughter, asking her, if she had the book for which he



asked, to send it to him. My daughter, who did not have a copy to spare and recalled the fact that Mrs. N—— lived in the same city of Tula, from which the petitioner had written, and had some of my forbidden writings, sent the petitioner her card, with the request that the bearer be given whatever she had. This request of my daughter, addressed to Mrs. N——, served as a cause for her arrest and for all those torments to which she has been subjected.

I think that such measures are irrational, useless, cruel, and, above all, unjust. They are irrational, because there is no explanation, and there can be none, why, out of those thousands of people who have my writings and give them to their friends to read, this one Mrs. N—— should be selected for persecution. These measures are useless, because they attain no end: they do not stop anything, because the evil which it is supposed to stop continues to exist among thousands of men, whom it is impossible to have all arrested and kept in prisons. These measures are cruel, because for many feeble and nervous people, such as Mrs. N—— is, domiciliary visits, inquests, and especially imprisonment, may be the causes of severe nervous diseases, as was the case with Mrs. N——, and even of death. Above all else, these measures are in the highest degree unjust, because they are not directed against the person from which proceeds that which by the government is considered to be an evil.

Such a person in the given case am I: I write those books, and in writing and through oral intercourse disseminate those ideas which the government considers to be an evil, and so, if the government wants to counteract the dissemination of this evil, it must direct upon me all the measures now used by it against those persons who accidentally fall under its influence, and who are guilty but of this, that they have some forbidden books in which they are interested, and that they give these to their

friends to read. The government ought to act thus also for this other reason, that I not only do not conceal this my activity, but, on the contrary, in this very letter announce that I have written and disseminated those books which are considered harmful by the government, and that I continue to write and disseminate, in books, in letters, and in conversations, just such ideas as those which are expressed in my books.

The essence of these ideas is this, that the unquestionable law of God, which stands higher than all human laws, was revealed to men; according to it we must all stop warring and doing violence to one another, and should, on the contrary, aid one another,—we must act toward others as we would have others act toward us.

These ideas, with the practical deductions from them, I have expressed in my books, and am trying still more clearly and more accessibly to express in a book which I am writing now. The same ideas I express in conversations and in letters which I write to friends and to strangers. The same ideas I express even now to you, in pointing out those cruelties and acts of violence, which are contrary to God and which are committed by the officers of your ministry.

Gamaliel's words, which were said concerning the dissemination of the Christian teaching, "If this thing is from men, it will be destroyed, and if it is from God, you cannot destroy it; beware, therefore, lest you become an adversary of God," will always remain a lesson of true governmental wisdom in its relation to the manifestation of the spiritual activity of men. If this activity is spurious, it falls of itself; if it has God's work for its contents, like that God's work of our time which strives to substitute the principle of rational love for that of violence, no external conditions can either accelerate or retard its completion. If the government shall permit the unhampered dissemination of these ideas, they will

spread slowly and evenly ; if the government shall, as it does now, subject to persecution those men who have made these ideas their own and transmit them to others, the dissemination of these ideas will be diminished amidst timid, weak, and unsettled men to the extent to which it will be intensified among strong, energetic, and settled men. And so the process of the dissemination of the truth will not stop or be arrested or be accelerated, no matter how the government may act.

Such, in my opinion, is the general and invariable law of the dissemination of truth, and so the wisest thing the government can do in relation to the manifestation of undesirable ideas is not to undertake anything, still more, not to use such unworthy, cruel, and obviously unjust measures as the tormenting of people, only because they are doing what tens of thousands of men have been doing, without being persecuted for it.

But if the government insists on not being inactive, and on punishing, threatening, and abating what it considers to be an evil, the least irrational and the least unjust thing it can do consists in directing all the measures for punishing, threatening, and abating the evil against what by the government is considered to be its source, that is, against me, the more so, since I declare in advance that I will continue without cessation to do until my death what the government considers to be an evil, but what I consider to be my sacred duty before God.

Do not imagine, I beg you, that in asking you to direct against me the measures of violence which have been employed against some of my acquaintances, I assume that the employment of such measures against me presents any difficulties for the government,—that my popularity and my social standing defend me against domiciliary visits, inquests, deportation, imprisonment, and other worse acts of violence. Not only do I not think so, but I am also convinced that if the government

shall act with determination against me, will deport or imprison me, or will apply even severer measures, this will not offer any especial difficulties, and public opinion will not be provoked, nay, the majority of men will fully approve of such a mode of action and will say that that ought to have been done long ago.

God knows that, writing this letter, I am not submitting to any desire to dare the government or to have something to say, but that it is called forth by a moral necessity which consists in taking the guilt off innocent people for acts committed by me, and, above all, is written in order to point out to the members of the government, you among the number, the cruelty, irrationality, and injustice of the measures employed, and to ask you, to the best of your ability, to put a stop to them and to free yourself of the moral responsibility for them.

I shall be very thankful to you, if you shall answer me with a simple unofficial letter, telling me what you think of what I have expressed, and whether you will fulfil my prayer, which is, that in the future you will transfer all the persecutions, if they are indispensable, to me, from the government's standpoint the chief offender.

With the feeling of sincere good-will, I remain respectfully yours.

*Moscow, April 20, 1896.*

## ON THE DECEPTION OF THE CHURCH

I HAVE received and continue to receive your numerous letters, dear ———, and I should like to answer in detail what to me is the most important part in them.

I think it superfluous to reply to your unjust assumptions that (1) I am angry at you, (2) that I think that our life ends here, (3) that I may and must be worried by the financial help to some (selected by you out of millions of just such people, who surround me), because all these replies have been made by me in advance in my writings with as great a circumstantiality as I am capable of. (I send you a collection of my writings.) In my prohibited writings, you know, you will find these answers.

I cannot be angry at you, because, above all, I love you, and so I should myself like to help you in your hard and dangerous situation. I am speaking of your desire to hypnotize yourself into the ecclesiastic faith. This is very dangerous, because with such hypnotization that which is most precious in man — his reason — is lost.

I shall begin from the beginning. I began this letter before receiving the letter about Isaák Sírin with the copy of the declaration to the governor, and this letter of yours and the declaration still more provoked in me the desire, and called out in me the consciousness of my duty to try to help you, and, I will say frankly, not you alone, but many people, who are in the same situation with you, or are about to enter into it. I am speaking of sincere, pure men, who adopt this or that conviction, not in order

to justify their situation, but only because they see the truth in it.

One day a very rich and distinguished lady of the court, speaking of faith, told me that she believed like "Mother Akulína," and she apparently thought that she had said something very clever and even profound: such a refined lady, and she condescends to believe like Mother Akulína. But she not only said something stupid, but even told an absolute untruth.

This lady is educated in all kinds of languages, has studied cosmography, history, knows of the existence of Voltaire, Renan, Brahminism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and so she cannot believe like Mother Akulína. Mother Akulína, in her belief in the Mother, the Queen of Heaven, and in Saint Nicholas, and in the Father, the King of Heaven, who lives in heaven, and so forth, believes in the highest that has been reached by her consciousness, and this belief not only does not present any contradiction with her comprehension of life, but even illuminates and elucidates for her the phenomena of the world. For the lady this is impossible. She knows that the world was not created six thousand years ago; that mankind has not been derived from Adam and Eve, but from the evolution of the animal; she knows that, besides the Christians of her denomination, there are five times as many people of other faiths than the Christian; she knows that Christianity has been corrupted and has brought forth hundreds and thousands of inimical sects, and has degenerated into the Inquisition and into savage fanaticism; she knows how the ecumenical councils, in which the dogmas were established, took place; she knows that the same happened in Buddhism with their King Asoka, and in other faiths; she knows that the religions are subject to the same law of evolution as organisms and states, — they are born, develop, reach the highest point, and then grow old and disappear, like the Egyptian and

the Persian religions; she knows that our so-called Holy Scripture did not come down from heaven, but was written by men, was purged and corrupted, and so cannot have any infallible authority; she knows that there is no firm heaven, and that, therefore, neither Enoch, nor Elijah, nor Christ had any place to go to, when they flew away from the earth, and that, if they flew upwards, they are flying still; she knows that all those miracles with which they try to prove the authenticity of the ecclesiastic faith are repeated in all the other faiths, — such as the birth from a virgin, and the signs at birth, and the prophecy and the wisdom in childhood, and the cures, and the resurrection, and everything else, — that all these inventions of miracles are repeated in all the faiths, just as are the miracles of the exploits of the heroes in the popular epos. The lady must know all that, because she has been taught all that, and she could have read all that in books, which are accessible to her, and all that is known to those gentlemen who frequent her drawing-room.

And so she not only has no right to believe like Mother Akulína, but even *cannot* believe like her. She can say that she believes so, but she cannot believe so. For her to believe, she needs a faith in which she could, like that woman, believe as in the highest reached by her cognition, and a faith which would not only not contradict her comprehension of the phenomena of the world, but would also illumine, elucidate, and unify all her knowledge.

This lady will not understand me, because she needs the faith of Mother Akulína, in order that she may be able to continue to live as she does, that is, impiously to swallow every day, for the gratification of her lusts and luxury, the labour of hundreds of working people, and, at the same time, to speak of God and Christ and of her religiousness. Only by adopting and professing the faith of Mother Akulína, in other words, the faith of men who lived two thousand years ago, can she lead such an im-

pious life with the self-contentment of religiousness. And so I can understand it in the case of the lady; but what do you, who are deported to the end of the world and who are going from one prison to another, and from place to place, because you want to introduce the Christian truths into life, what do you want with this terrible deception and with this insolvable contradiction between your beliefs and your knowledge and comprehension of the phenomena of the universe?

Just think what you profess and what situation you are in. I understand, it is very nice and agreeable to feel one in faith with those who surround us, when the bells toll the "hours" at Lent, and the communicants go and ask each other's forgiveness, and beautifully pray in beautiful churches, calling forth images of the ancient, peaceful, solemn life, — it would be very nice to be united with them and to live that life. But that is a self-deception, — it is only the playing of a part. But your situation is not this, that you now, at Lent, are in Pudózh, but that you are living in God's world, upon the planet Earth, which is inhabited by fifteen thousand millions of inhabitants of all kinds of races, who profess different religions, in this one hundred thousandth year or so after the appearance of the first men, — in one of the corners of the northern hemisphere, amidst a nation called Russian, and you live in this place and in this time by the will of God, the one by whose will not only this planet Earth exists with its inhabitants, but also this to me obviously infinite world. You know this position of yours, and in conformity with this position you ought to establish your relation to God, that is, to establish a relation which would be just as good for any man in your situation, — a relation which would be clear, comprehensible, and obligatory for every thinking person, a Japanese, a Malay, a Zulu.

And what relation to God are *you*, with your knowledge,



trying to establish? You say: "God revealed Himself and His truth five thousand years ago to one small Asiatic nation, and not completely at that: nineteen hundred years ago He revealed it in full, in that He sent His son, also God, to the same little nation. And the fact that the people then killed this son of God caused the sin of the first men and of all those who came after to be redeemed. But besides this redemption, God through this son of His established the church, which guards the whole truth and aids in the salvation of men by means of sacraments, — by smearing one with oil, giving one bread and wine to swallow, — and this church exists only in Pudózh or in Russia; but all men who have lived before this church and who live outside of it are not taken into consideration."

Tell this, and many other things about baptism, images, masses for the dead, and, above all, about a punishing and redeeming God, to some fresh, sensible man, who has never heard of it, — and he will stare at you or will run away from you, for fear that in your madness you will begin to strike him, or he will bind you as a dangerous lunatic.

Only because this poison was inoculated in us in our childhood, we bear it all, as though it were not noticeable. And what is most terrible, this frightful, slowly inoculated poison has made useless and inefficacious for us Christ's faith, which answers the highest demands of the men of our time.

We have lived nineteen hundred years since Christ; but His teaching in all its purity even now completely answers all our demands for the establishment of our relation to God, not to the God of the Jews and of the Orthodox, or Catholic, or Protestant Church, but to that God by whose will exists this infinite universe, and amidst it the planet Earth, and upon earth I, who live after hundreds of thousands of years of the evolution of animal

life in Pudózh, or in New York, or in the deserts of Africa.

The chief difference between the private, exclusive relation, which the churchmen, the Buddhists, the Brahmins, the Mohammedans, and others call their religion, and the true Christian faith is this, that all those religions, to say nothing of their incompatibility with knowledge and common sense, have the property of excluding, denying one another, whereas Christ's religion is such that it is not only comprehensible and accessible to everybody, but also cannot be rejected, cannot be disagreed with. This religion is not only not exclusive, but, on the contrary, coincides with everything true and exalted in all the other religions.

It says that the beginning of everything is spiritual, rational, and full of love. This beginning is called God and Father. It calls this beginning Father, because man recognizes this beginning in himself. Entering into life, it seems to man that he lives as an animal, that his animal being is his ego; but in proportion as his reason is developed, he sees that this animal is not free, that it suffers and perishes, and in his consciousness he feels that there is something which is not subject to oppression, nor to suffering, nor to perdition; and man enters into a contradiction with himself and into despair.

It is to this internal contradiction that, developing it, Christ's teaching gives an answer. It tells a man: it only seems to you that you live as an animal; but that only seems so to you, as it seems to you that the bank is running, when you travel in a boat, or as it seems to you that the sun is moving. What lives in man is only his spiritual, rational, and good beginning, — the son of God. Man must transfer his ego from the animal to the spiritual, and satisfy the demands, not of the animal, but of the spiritual being. Man need but understand this, and the contradiction of his life disappears: every oppression,

every suffering disappears, he becomes completely free. Death is destroyed, because what is spiritual, what is God Himself, cannot be destroyed: it always was, is, and will be.

In this transference of our ego from the animal to the spiritual lies the essence of Christ's teaching, and the details of this teaching, begun with Christ and continued by all humanity, consist in the destruction, the disclosure of those offences by means of which the men of the animal life, from the inertia of tradition, try to conceal from man his ruin in the animal life and to maintain him on this false path. The disclosure of these offences is the work of the life of men,—that which God wants of men.

Such, in its broadest features, is Christ's teaching,—that teaching by which the relation of man to the world is established. And this teaching is not exceptional, but general, the highest, most accessible to all, and not only does not contradict the other teachings and modern knowledge, but even illumines and elucidates them.

And here, in the place of it, we will return to the comprehension of life, with sacrifices, redemptions, sacraments, an evil, punishing and rewarding, personal God,—such as it was five thousand years ago. What for? God save us from that, dear friend.

What you do and what you may do appears to me like this: a man is travelling in a steam automobile. He does not know the road, or simply is tired of travelling fast, and he wants to arrest the motion,—so he sticks a rod between the wheels. He puts in one rod: the wheels catch it, but the machine still goes on, though more slowly. He lets down another rod, from the thinner end. There seems to be no trouble: the machine still works; but the wheels will soon catch the thicker end of the rod, and then the machine will be clogged and spoiled. We cannot with impunity admit anything irrational, anything

not justified by reason, into our faith. Reason is given us from above, to guide us. But if we choke it, this will not pass with impunity. And the ruin of reason is the most terrible ruin.

Here I have told you a part of what I think, — I told it lovingly to you. Please, do not answer me by points, discussing any one of them in particular. If you disagree, explain to me how you combine your faith with your comprehension of life, and briefly and clearly express to me your world-conception.

Meanwhile good-bye. I kiss you.

*Moscow, March 16, 1896.*

### THREE PHASES OF LIFE

You give me three examples of your inconsistency: (1) malice toward men, (2) the lack of correspondence between life and the comprehension of life, and (3) the doubt in the future, the eternal life.

The first,—malice toward men, the impotence, not only of love, but also of forgiveness,—I have experienced more powerfully than anything else, and I suffer very much from it. I console myself with the thought that God aids me in this, and there are interruptions of malice, there are flashes of the consciousness of my guilt, my sins, and so—a cessation of condemnations, and even manifestations of pity, where there was malice. I am sure that God gives you, too, these minutes, these sparks of fire. And if there are sparks, there will be warmth and light.

I will tell you what that tinder is into which I catch these sparks, and with what I try to fan the fire in my heart.

Above all, repentance; not wholesale repentance: "I have sinned, father, I have sinned," or, still worse, the admission that I am wholly in sin, that I was born in sin, that every step of mine is sin. This admission, collecting, compacting all the sins in one heap, seems to separate them from me and deprives me of that inevitable spiritual use, which by the mercy of God is attached to every sin, as an antidote to a poison.

Repentance does not consist in repenting of the whole past life in general, but in seeing in our soul the traces

and remnants (it is well, if only traces and remnants) of former sins, definite, comprehensible, committed then and then, and in forming from these remnants a vivid picture of our former life, and the present viciousness and savagery, for every point in particular.

What ought we to do, in order that we may stop being angry at a man, in order to make peace, forgive, if there is anything to forgive, and even pity and love him? Best of all is to think of some sin of ours in his presence, a sin like his. That is particular happiness, and then there is an immediate cure. But that happens but rarely (but it only seems to be rare because we do not look for it well), and so we have to look for a similar, or at least equal, or, still better, worse sin, in the presence of others. And if we do so sincerely, seriously, and vividly think of our abomination,—we shall forgive, make peace, and, God willing, pity and love.

Of course, God forbend that we dissemble, pretending to love and pity, when we do not. That is worse than hatred. And similarly, God forbend that we should not catch and fan this spark of pity and love for our enemy, that divine love, when God sends us this spark. There can, indeed, be nothing more precious.

We have a terrible habit of forgetting,—of forgetting our evil, our sins. And there is no more radical means for forgetting our sins, than wholesale repentance. All the sins are boiled down, as it were, into one impermeable mass, with which nothing can be done, and if a nice little sin of our own is needed, such as would redeem the sin of those who sin against us, none is found. But this museum ought to be kept in order, so that we may find at once what is needed, when it is needed, and all the objects, the sins, ought to be kept separately, so that they should not cover one another, but may appear in the most impressive form. We must not forget, but remember, always remember our sins, in order by means of

them to mitigate the condemnation of others. I think that the chief difference between a good and a bad man is this, that the good man remembers all the evil which he has done, and forgets and does not see the good, and a bad man does the other way.

Thus, as to the first point, I can tell you what has been pointed out to me by God: do not forgive yourself, and then you will forgive others.

The second, the lack of correspondence between life and that which, you say, it ought to be, and which, we may say outright, it will be, is its symptom, that is, the sign of life: the acorn does not correspond to the oak, the egg to the hen, the repentant sinner to a saint. In all of them there takes place a motion from a lower condition to a higher, from the worse to the better, from the lesser to the greater, — all that is not precise, — there is taking place *life*.

Now in this life there is a threefold relation :

(1) Life goes on, and a being, like the acorn, a child, often even a man, does not feel, does not cognize this motion, and neither helps nor retards it.

(2) Man recognizes this motion,—he sees toward what it is moving, and he hastens this motion, hurries to be what he ought to become. The boy wants to be a grown-up: he imagines that if he puts on a uniform, goes out hunting, drinks, and swears, he will be a man. The same takes place in the religious life: a man sees that he is going toward the good, toward the liberation from sin, toward sanctity, and imagines that, if he sacrifices wethers and tapers, if he goes to confession and communion, or if he assures himself that such sacrifice has been made, he is purged of sin, that he will actually be freed from sin and will reach sanctity. That is a terrible path. As a boy is corrupted, if he wishes to be what he is not, so is a man who religiously wants to be something he is not.

(3) Man sees whither he is going, knows that the

disagreement between his life and his consciousness is a condition of his life, and with all his strength tries in his life to diminish this disagreement, knowing that this is not his own personal matter, but that of his Father, of Him who sent him hither such as he is, and implanted in him the consciousness of what he ought to be and will be. And man, knowing that this lack of correspondence is not something especial, something accidental, but the law of every life, without which no motion is possible, and no approximation to the eternal and infinite perfection, God,—knowing this, man sees in this lack of correspondence the condition of his life and good.

Indeed, if man did not have any comprehension, and the resulting consciousness of the disagreement between his life and what it ought to be, and if life were such as it was when he was a senseless sinner (it is not only you and I, but everybody, that passes through sin), it would be worse for him. And if there were not his sinfulness, and he could at once be what he wants to be according to his comprehension, it would be worse still: there would be no reason for living, no life at all.

But you will say: "Why do I not go ahead? Why am I still such as I was?" Thank God for feeling thus. It is bad when a man says to himself: "I am better than I was; here, for example, I do not smoke, do not fornicate, do not even grow angry,—I do not give my tithe as before, and I am not like the publican." God help us always to be dissatisfied and not to see those steps which we have made (if we have made them), upon approaching Him. These tiny steps are noticeable only when we do what we ought not to do,—when we compare ourselves with our former selves, or with others. We must try to be perfect, as the Father is perfect, and so to compare ourselves with Him, that is, the highest, infinite good and truth, and then we shall not see our steps. What will support us in life is not these Lilliputian steps on the



path of goodness, but only the consciousness of our doing the will of God. God's will is this, that, having done everything we can for the destruction of the disagreement, we may recognize that we have done what we cannot help doing, as in the case of the labourer and the husbandmen who return from the field. Another striking thing is this, that this lack of correspondence between consciousness and life, which so disturbs many, is always one and the same in the case of all men,—in the case of the holiest and of the most sinful of men. At least I know in my own case that in the sacred minutes of consciousness at every point of my path of life, the lack of correspondence and the dissatisfaction with myself have been one and the same,—constant. I did not feel it only when I sank morally. Consequently it is not something special, but the property of a true human life.

Yes, the devil cannot say to sensible people who sin, and know that they sin: "You are not sinning at all, when you sin, kill, fornicate, and so on. Continue to live in the same way. You and everybody else will fare well." The people will not believe him. So he invents a sophism which leads to the same, that is, that men, sinning, should believe that they are not sinning, and should bathe in their sins, without noticing them,—and so he says to them: "Let us assume that your life is such as will not lead all to the good and as may be called sinful. Let us assume that you sin, living as you do; but you cannot even live without sinning, and the consciousness of sinning is too oppressive, and God could not have meant that all should constantly be tormented by this consciousness, and so He has given a means for freeing oneself from this consciousness. This means is the sacrifices which you make, or which are made for you,—in general redemptory sacrifices."

We have so long been used to this, we have so imbibed with the milk this representation of a life in which we

can be at peace and satisfied with ourselves, that that natural, inevitable condition of the living human soul in which we feel that we strive from what is worse to what is better, that is, the lack of correspondence between life and consciousness, presents itself to us as something exceptional.

I frequently think of the hero of a story which I should like to write: a man educated, let us say, in a circle of revolutionists, himself at first a revolutionist, then a populist, socialist, Orthodox, a monk on Mount Athos, then an atheist, a man of a family, then a Dukhobor. He begins everything, throws away everything, without ending anything. People laugh at him. He has done nothing, and dies ingloriously somewhere in a prison. Dying, he thinks that he has wasted his life for nothing, but it is he who is a saint.

The third is the suspicion that everything which you think and feel about eternal life may be the fruit of unconscious self-deception, which results from fear before the apparition of life. You write that you cannot clearly express this condition. Indeed, it cannot be expressed. This condition is only a sign of something unfinished in the soul.

If there is nothing, we should live and enjoy ourselves. But you can no longer do so. If all this is a bad deception, an apparition, we ought to shoot ourselves or be silent. But you cannot do that, either. But if there is a God, we must throw off, cut down everything which separates us from Him. And that you are doing and will do.

Again the terrible trick of the devil — the frivolous, ungrounded, false faith in the *future*, and not in the *eternal* life. I think that if there were no false teaching about the future life, no one would have any doubt as to the eternal life (the one about which your child, who undoubtedly lived it, told you so clearly). Again the devil cannot in any way say that there is no eternal life, when

there is but the one eternal life, and we cannot know any other (the dead child lives it). Again he invents a trick: the carnal life is a crossing of a river, an abyss, between this shore and the next, an unquestionably firm ford, which is right on our path, and it is impossible to miss it, or to doubt in its firmness or that it leads to the good. And so the devil builds a bridge, which ends in a pit, which does not at all lead whither it ought to lead, and the devil takes people there under the pretext that it is easier to cross on his bridge. And standing on his bridge and seeing the abyss before oneself, one believes that there is no life.

I have experienced it. Do not believe him. If there is any doubt, it is only so because you have not lost your belief in the future life of personalities. That is his, the devil's, deception.

Eternal life is like a balloon. The gas is not our force, but God's, which draws us upwards; the cables which hold it down are the delusions; and the ballast is the bias, our will, and not God's. If the cable is cut, the ballast holds us. In proportion as we throw out the ballast, we fly upwards.

*Before 1899.*

## THE COMMUNE AND THE WORLD

(From a letter to D. A. Khilkov)

THE other day I received your letter, D. A., and I have just finished reading it again. I will try to answer its chief contents, as I understand them. What of it, if the communes have fallen to pieces? If we considered these communes to be a sample of how Christ's teaching ought to be realized in the world and of how the kingdom of God should be established upon earth, that would be terrible: then the falling to pieces of the commune would show the inadequacy of Christ's teaching; but thus the communes were not looked upon, either by us who were outside them, or by those who took part in them. (If any one looked upon them in this light, their falling to pieces would correct this false view, and so the falling to pieces is in this sense even useful.) These communes were a certain form of life which some people chose in their motion along the path indicated by Christ. Other people chose other forms (or other people were placed under different conditions), like you, I, Ge, and all men who travel on this path. And, as you yourself write, no matter how good separate settlements may be, they are good only so long as they are needed, — all forms, as forms, are of necessity certainly transient, like waves. If the communes have fallen to pieces, that was so only because the men who lived in them outgrew their integument and tore it. We can only rejoice at this. I now am writing partly about this, and in a letter I shall of course not be able to express everything clearly, but I will try, and

you help me, — understand even what is not clearly expressed.

Christianity is a motion along a path indicated by Christ, — by means of the truth toward the full perfection of the heavenly Father. And Christianity is the more Christianity, the more it is motion, the more accelerated this motion is. Thus the chief of the publicans, Zacchæus, who lived all in lust and suddenly decided to give, was at that moment more of a Christian than the disciples who asked what their rewards would be for their loyalty; the thief on the cross, the harlot, the publican, are more than the Pharisee. Every man, no matter on what low stage he may stand, may be a Christian, may move and accelerate this motion to infinity (observe that nothing touches us so much or gives us so much pleasure as these motions, when the sinner repents, — the lost sheep, the coin), and, no matter on what high stage of righteousness a man may be, he can stop moving, stop being a Christian. Nothing arrests the motion so much as a certain form, as self-observation, as the consciousness of being at a certain stage (indeed, this consciousness is the form where “the left hand does not know what the right is doing,” and, “not fit for the kingdom of God is he that takes hold of the plough and looks back”).

Precisely this the churches have done. What is the church? Read the Orthodox, the Catholic, and the Lutheran catechisms. They deny one another, and each of them asserts that it has the truth. Thus a strict, precise definition of the church is — men who assert of themselves that the comprehension of the truth and the fulfilment of it, as practised by them, are the only correct ones. But this is said by every man who recognizes the form chosen by him as the only regular one. This tendency of men of recognizing the form as regular, though not approaching the cruelty of the church, is the chief impediment to Christianity, — it is friction. It is the

problem of men who follow Christ to diminish this friction as much as possible. There are an endless number of forms for following in the path of Christ, just as there are an endless number of points in the line, and not one is more important than another. What is important is the rapidity of motion, and the rapidity of motion is in inverse proportion to the possibility of determining the points.

Again: you say that you do not like the word and conception of "self-perfection," and that you do not like perfection itself: it is too indeterminate and broad. I understand this. This is connected with the questions about the communes and forms, and this is what I have been thinking of it (the parable of the labourers in the vineyard who do not pay tribute and of the talents): The true life is given to man under two conditions: (1) that he may do good to men (but the good is one, and one only, — to increase love toward men, — to feed a hungry man, visit a sick man, and so forth, — all this is only for the purpose of increasing love in men), and (2) that he should increase the power of love which is given to *him*. One conditions the other: good works, which increase love in men, are good only when in their performance I feel that love is being increased in me, when I do them lovingly, with emotion; and love is increased in me (I am being perfected), only when I do good works and evoke love in other men. Thus, if I do good works and remain cold, or, if I perfect myself and think that I am increasing love in myself, while this does not evoke love in other men (at times even provokes evil), that is *not it*. Only then do I know — and we all know — that it is *it*, when I love more and people, too, are filled with more love (by the way, this is also a proof that love is the one essence — one God in all of us — which, by discovering Him in ourselves discovers Him in everybody else, and vice versa).

Thus I think that every arrangement, every definition, every arrest of consciousness at any stage is the predominance of care about increasing love in oneself, a self-perfection without good works. The grossest form of this kind is the standing on a pillar, but every form is more or less such a standing. Every form separates us from men, consequently also from the possibility of good works and from the incitement of love in them. Such also are the communes, and this is their defect, if we recognize them as a constant form. The standing on a pillar and the going away into the wilderness and the living in a commune may be necessary to men for a time, but as a constant form they are an obvious sin and madness. It is impossible to live a pure, saintly life on a pillar or in a commune, because man is deprived of one-half of life, that of a communion with the world, without which his life has no meaning. To live thus constantly, it is necessary for us to deceive ourselves, because it is too clear that, as it is impossible in a turbid stream by any chemical process to separate a circle of pure water, so it is impossible amidst the whole world living by violence for the sake of lust to live alone or alone to be a saint. It is necessary to buy or rent land or a cow, and it is necessary to enter into relations with the external, non-Christian world. These relations are most important and necessary. It is impossible and unnecessary to go away from them. It is possible only to deceive oneself. The whole business of a disciple of Christ is to establish the most Christian relations with this world.

Imagine that all men who understand the teaching of truth as we do should assemble and settle on an island. Would that be life? And consider that the whole world, all men, are involuntarily going in the same direction with us, and that the men who understand the truth as we do, who are standing (now) on the same step, are scattered all over the world, and that we have the joy of meeting

them and knowing them and their labours. Is not that better? Indeed it is.

You say that it is impossible to love Herod. I do not know. But I know, and so do you, that we must love him; I know, and so do you, that if I do not love him, I am pained, I have no life (1 John iii. 14), and so we must try and we can work.

I imagine a man who has lived all his life in love amidst those who love him, but who does not love Herod, and another, who has used all his efforts for loving Herod and has remained indifferent to those who loved him and for twenty years did not love him, but in the twenty-first year came to love Herod and made Herod love him and other men, and I do not know who is better. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?"

1899 (?).



## CONCERNING THE CONGRESS OF PEACE

(Letter to certain Swedes)

GENTLEMEN:—The idea expressed in your beautiful letter, that universal disarmament may be attained in the easiest and most certain way by means of the refusal of separate individuals to take part in military service, is quite correct. I even think that it is the only way of freeing men from the ever growing terrible calamities of militarism. But your idea that the question about substituting public works for military service, in the case of those persons who refuse to do it, may be considered at the Conference about to be held at the request of the emperor, seems to me quite faulty, if for no other reason than that the Conference can be nothing else but one of those hypocritical institutions, whose purpose is not the attainment of peace, but, on the contrary, the concealment from men of that one means for attaining universal peace which advanced people are beginning to see.

The Conference, they say, will have for its aim, if not the abolition of armaments, at least the cessation of the increase of them. It is assumed that at this Conference the representatives of the governments will agree not to increase their armaments. If that is so, there involuntarily arises the question as to how the governments of those states will act, which during the meeting of the Conference happen to be weaker than their neighbours. It is not very likely that such governments will agree to remain even in the future in the same weaker condition than that of their neighbours. But if they should agree to remain

in this weaker condition, through their firm faith in the decrees of the Conference, they could be weaker still and not spend anything on the army.

But if the business of the Conference shall consist in equalizing the military powers of the states and in keeping them equal, and it should be possible to attain such an impossible equalization, there involuntarily arises the question: why need the governments stop at their present armaments, and why do they not descend to lower ones? Why is it necessary for Germany, France, or Russia to have, let us say, one million soldiers, and not five hundred thousand, or ten thousand, or one thousand? If it is possible to diminish, why not reduce it to the minimum, and finally in place of the armies put up champions, David and Goliath, and decide international affairs according to the result of the fight of the champions?

They say that the conflicts of the governments will be decided by a court of arbitration. But, to say nothing of the fact that the affairs will not be decided by the representatives of the nations, but by the representatives of the governments, when there would be no guarantee that the solutions would be correct,—who will execute the sentence of the court?—The armies.—Whose armies?—Those of all the powers.—But the forces of these powers are not equal. Who, for example, will on the Continent enforce the decision which, let us say, will be disadvantageous for Germany, Russia, or France, which are united in an alliance? Or who will on the sea enforce a decision which is opposed to the interests of England, America, or France? The decision of the court of arbitration against the military violence of the states will be executed by means of military violence; that is, that which is to be limited will itself be a means of limitation. To catch a bird, it is necessary to throw salt upon its tail.

I remember, during the siege of Sevastopol, I was one

day sitting with the adjutants of Sáken, the commander of the garrison, when into the waiting-room came S. S. Urúsov, a very brave officer, a very odd fellow, and at the same time one of the best European chess-players of the time. He said that he had some business with the general. An adjutant took him to the general's cabinet. Ten minutes later Urúsov passed by us with a dissatisfied face. The adjutant who saw him out returned to us and told us on what business Urúsov had come to see Sáken. He came to Sáken to ask him to challenge the English to play a game of chess in the front trench, at the van of the Fifth Bastion, which had several times passed from hand to hand and had cost several hundreds of lives.

There is no doubt but that it would have been much better to play chess in the trench than to kill people. But Sáken did not consent to Urúsov's proposition, as he knew quite well that it would be possible to play chess in the trench only if there existed a mutual confidence in the parties that the condition would be carried out. But the presence of armies standing in front of the trench, and of the cannon directed upon it, proved that no such confidence existed. So long as there were armies on either side, it was evident that the matter would be decided with bayonets, and not with a game of chess. The same is true of international questions. For them to be decided by a court of arbitration, it is necessary for the powers to have absolute confidence that they will mutually carry out the decision of the court. If the confidence exists, there is no need whatsoever of the armies. But if there are armies, it is clear that this confidence is lacking, and the international questions cannot be decided in any other way than by force of arms. So long as there are any armies, they are needed, not only for the purpose of making new acquisitions, as now all the states are doing, — some in Asia, some in Africa, and some in Europe, — but also for the purpose of retaining by force what has

been acquired by force. Only by conquering is it possible to acquire and retain by force. What always conquers is the *gros bataillons*. And so, if a government has an army, it has to have as much as possible of it. In this does its duty consist. If a government does not do so, it is unnecessary. A government may do a great deal in its internal affairs,—it may set free, enlighten, enrich its people, it may construct roads and canals, colonize deserts, arrange public works, but there is one thing it cannot do, namely that for which the Conference is called, that is, it cannot reduce its military strength.

But if the aim of the Conference, as is to be seen from the late explanations, shall consist in eliminating from use such instruments of destruction as present themselves to people as specially cruel (why not try, among the number and above all else, to eliminate at the same time the seizure of letters, the forgery of telegrams, and espionage, and all those horrible rascalities which form a necessary condition of military defence?), such a prohibition of using in the struggle such means as are at hand is fully as possible as the injunction given to people who are fighting for their lives, during the fight not to touch the most sensitive parts of their adversaries. And why are a wound and death from an explosive bullet any worse than a wound caused by the simplest kind of a bullet or a splinter in a very sensitive spot, the sufferings from which reach the utmost limit, and from which death ensues as from any other weapon?

It is incomprehensible how mentally sound adults can seriously express such strange ideas.

Let us assume that the diplomatists, who devote all their lives to lying, are so used to this vice and constantly live and act in such a dense atmosphere of lying that they themselves do not notice all the senselessness and mendacity of their propositions; but how can private individuals, honest individuals, — not those who, in order to

fawn before the emperor, laud his ridiculous proposition, — help seeing that nothing can be the result of this Conference but the confirmation of the deception in which the governments keep their subjects, as was the case with Alexander I.'s Holy Alliance?

The Conference will have for its purpose, not the establishment of peace, but the concealment from men of the only means of freeing them from the calamities of war, which consists in the refusals of separate individuals to take part in military murder, and so the Conference can in no way take this question under advisement.

All those who from conviction refuse to do military service will always be treated by every government as the Dukhobors have been treated by the Russian government. At the same time that it proclaimed to the whole world its quasi-peaceable intentions, it secretly from all tormented, ruined, and expelled the most peaceable people of Russia, only because they were not peaceable in words, but in deeds, and so refused to do military service. Just so, though less harshly, have acted all the European governments in cases of refusal to do military service. Thus have acted the Austrian, Prussian, French, Swedish, Swiss, Dutch governments, nor can they act differently.

They cannot act differently, because, ruling their subjects by a force which is formed by a disciplined army, they can nowise leave the diminution of this force, and consequently of their power, to the accidental moods of private individuals, the more so that, in all likelihood, as soon as work could by all men be substituted for military service, the vast majority of people (nobody likes to kill and to be killed) would prefer work to military service, and very soon there would be such a great mass of labourers and such a small number of soldiers, that there would not be any one to compel the labourers to work.

The liberals, socialists, and other so-called representative people, who are enmeshed in their own wordiness,

may imagine that their speeches in the Chambers and meetings, their unions, strikes, and pamphlets are very important phenomena, and that the refusals of separate individuals to do military service are unimportant phenomena, which it is not worth while to consider; but the governments know very well what for them is important, and what not, and the governments gladly allow all kinds of liberal and radical speeches in the Reichstags and labour-unions, and socialistic demonstrations, and even themselves make believe that they sympathize with all that, knowing that these phenomena are very useful for them, in that they divert the attention of the masses from the chief and only means of liberation; but they will never openly permit any refusals to do military service or refusals to pay taxes for military service (that is one and the same thing), because they know that such refusals, in laying open the deception of the governments, undermine their power at the root.

So long as the governments will rule their nations by force and will wish, as they now do, to acquire new possessions (the Philippines, Port Arthur, and so forth) and to retain those that have been acquired (Poland, Alsace, India, Algiers, and so forth), they will not only never reduce the armies, but will, on the contrary, constantly increase them.

The other day the news was announced that an American regiment had refused to go to Iloilo. This news is given out as something surprising. But the surprise is, why such phenomena are not constantly repeated: how could all those Russian, German, French, Italian, American people, who have fought of late, at the will of strangers whom for the most part they do not respect, have gone to kill people of another nation, and to subject themselves to sufferings and death?

It would seem to be so clear and so natural for all these men to come to their senses, if not at the time when

they were being enlisted, at least at the last moment, when they are being led against the enemy, — to stop, throw down their guns, and call out to their adversaries to do the same.

This would seem to be so simple, so natural, that all people ought to act like that. But if people do not act thus, this is due to the fact that the people believe their governments, which assure them that all those burdens which men carry for the sake of war are imposed upon them for their own good. All the governments have with striking impudence always asserted that all those military preparations, and even the wars themselves which they wage, are needed for the sake of peace. Now they are making in this field of hypocrisy and deception a new step, which consists in this, that those very governments, for the existence of which armies and wars are necessary, make it appear that they are busy finding measures for the reduction of the armies and the abolition of wars. The governments want to assure the nations that the separate individuals have no cause for troubling themselves about their liberation from war: the governments themselves will so fix it in their conferences that the armies will at first be reduced and later finally abolished. But that is an untruth.

The armies can be reduced and abolished only against the will, and not with the will, of the governments. The armies will be reduced and abolished only when public opinion will brand the people who from fear or advantage sell their liberty and take up a position in the ranks of murderers, called the army; and will recognize the people, — now unknown and condemned, — who, in spite of all persecutions and sufferings borne by them, refuse to give their liberty into the hands of other men and again to become instruments of murder, to be what they are, — champions and benefactors of humanity.

Only then will the armies at first be reduced and then

entirely be abolished, and a new era will begin in the life of humanity.

This time is at hand.

And so I think that your idea that the refusals to do military service are phenomena of immense importance, and that they will free humanity from the calamities of militarism is quite correct; but that your idea that the Conference will contribute anything toward it is quite faulty. The Conference can only divert the people's attention from the one means of salvation and liberation.

*Moscow, January, 1899.*



## LETTER TO A. V. VLÁSOV<sup>1</sup>

RESPECTED BROTHER, ANDRÉY VASÍLEVICH:— I have received your letter and was glad to learn of you and your faith. Your having suffered from the worldly authorities proves that you are travelling on Christ's road. Every man who walks on that road cannot avoid falling in with the prince of this world. A light is not put under a bushel, but so that it may be seen by others. But the prince of the world cannot admit this, because Christ's light reveals his evil deeds. Only those serve God's work who, establishing His kingdom upon earth, arraign the deceptions of the prince of the world and suffer persecution for it. May God help you for it.

I fully agree with you as to what you say in your letter, and rejoiced in spirit, reading it. I should like to give you one piece of advice, and that is, in your arraignment do not lose your love for your brother; and also this, in the arraignment of the lie put more stress and reliance on reason and love than on verses from the Scripture. The Scripture is the work of human hands,— in it there may be errors, and everybody may interpret it, especially Revelation, as he pleases; but reason is given directly by God and to all,— Tartars, Chinamen, and all other nations have one and the same,— and it is impossible not to believe in reason. Only those who do not wish to know the truth do not believe in it. I enclose

<sup>1</sup> Vlášov's personality and the contents of his letter to Tolstóy are faithfully rendered in Part III., Chapters XXI. and XXVII. of the *Resurrection*.

a few articles on faith, as I understand it : two of them, *Christ's Commandments* and *How to Read the Gospel*, were composed by me ; the others are not mine, but I agree with them.

Your loving brother.

1889.

## LETTER TO A CORPORAL

You wonder how it is soldiers are taught that it is right to kill men in certain cases and in war, whereas in the Scripture, which is acknowledged to be sacred by those who teach this, there is nothing resembling such a permission, but there is the very opposite, — a prohibition to commit murder and even any insult against men, a prohibition to do to others what one does not wish to have done to oneself; you ask me whether this is not a deception, and if so, for whose advantage it is practised.

Yes, it is a deception, which is practised in favour of those who are accustomed to live by the sweat and blood of other people, and who for this purpose have been distorting Christ's teaching, which was given men for their good, but which now, in its distorted form, has become the chief source of all the calamities of men.

This happened in the following way :

The government and all those men of the upper classes who adhere to the government and live by the labours of others have to have means for controlling the labouring masses; the army is such a means. The defence against foreign enemies is only an excuse. The German government frightens its nation with the Russians and the French; the French frightens its nation with the Germans; the Russian frightens its nation with the Germans and the French, and so it is with all the nations; but neither the Germans, nor the Russians, nor the French wish to fight with their neighbours and with other nations; they prefer to live in peace with them and are afraid of war more than of anything in the world. But,

to have an excuse in their control of the labouring masses, the governments and the upper idle classes act like a gipsy, who whips his horse around the corner and then pretends that he is not able to hold it back. They stir up their people and another government, and then pretend that for the good or for the defence of their nation they cannot help but declare war, which again is profitable for the generals, officers, officials, merchants, and, in general, for the wealthy classes. In reality, war is only an inevitable consequence of the existence of the armies; but the armies are needed by the governments merely for the purpose of controlling their own labouring masses.

It is a criminal business, but the worst thing about it is this, that the governments, to have a rational foundation for their control of the masses, are obliged to pretend that they are professing the highest religious teaching known to men, that is, the Christian, and in this teaching educate their subjects. This teaching is in its essence opposed, not only to every murder, but even to every violence, and so, to be able to control the masses and be considered Christian, the governments had to distort Christianity and to conceal its true meaning from the masses and thus to deprive men of the good which Christ brought to them.

This distortion of Christianity took place long ago, in the time of the malefactor, Emperor Constantine, who for this was canonized a saint. All the subsequent governments, especially our own Russian government, have tried with all their strength to maintain this distortion and not to allow the masses to see the true meaning of Christianity, because, if they saw it, they would come to understand that the governments, with their taxes, soldiers, prisons, gallows, and cheating priests, are not only no pillars of Christianity, such as they pretend to be, but its greatest enemies.

In consequence of this distortion there result those

deceptions which startled you so much, and all those terrible calamities from which the masses suffer.

The masses are crushed, robbed, impoverished, ignorant, — they are dying out. Why? Because the land is in the hands of the rich; because the masses are enslaved in factories, in plants, in their daily occupations; because they are fleeced for the taxes, and the price for their labour is lowered, and the price for what they need is raised. How can they be freed? Shall the land again be taken away from the rich? But if that is done, the soldiers will come, will kill off the rioters, and will lock them up in prisons. Shall the factories, the plants, be taken away? The same will happen. Stick out in a strike? But that will never happen, — the rich can stick out longer than the labourers, and the armies will always be on the side of the capitalists. The masses will never get away from that want in which they are held, so long as the armies shall be in the power of the ruling classes.

But who are the armies, which hold the masses in this slavery? Who are those soldiers who will shoot at the peasants who have taken possession of the land, and at the strikers, if they do not disperse, and at the smugglers, who import wares without paying the revenue, — who will put into prisons and keep there those who refuse to pay the taxes? These soldiers are the same peasants whose land has been taken away, the same strikers, who want to raise their wages, the same payers of the taxes, who want to be freed from these payments.

Why do these men shoot at their brothers? Because it has been impressed upon them that the oath which they are compelled to take upon entering military service is obligatory for them, and that they may not kill men in general, but may kill them by command of the authorities, that is, the same deception which startled so much is practised upon them. But here arises the question, — how can people of sound mind, who frequently know

the rudiments and are even educated, believe in such a palpable lie? No matter how little educated a man may be, he none the less cannot help knowing that Christ did not permit any murder, but taught meekness, humility, forgiveness of offences, love of enemies; he cannot help but see that on the basis of the Christian teaching he cannot make a promise in advance that he will kill all those whom he is commanded to kill.

The question is, how can people of sound mind believe, as all those who are now doing military service have believed, in such an obvious deception? The answer to the question is this, that people are not deceived by this one deception alone, but have been prepared for it from childhood by a whole series of deceptions, a whole system of deceptions, which is called the Orthodox Church, and which is nothing but the coarsest kind of idolatry. According to this faith men are taught that God is triune, that besides this triune God there is also a heavenly queen, and that in addition to this queen there are also all kinds of saints, whose bodies have not decayed, and that in addition to the saints there are also the images of the Gods and of the queen of heaven, before which tapers have to be placed and prayers made with the hands, and that the most important and holy thing on earth is the pap which the priest makes on Sundays back of the partition out of wine and bread, that after the priest has whispered something over this, the wine will not be wine and the bread will not be bread, but the blood and body of one of the triune Gods, and so forth. All that is so stupid and senseless that it is absolutely impossible to understand what it all means, and, indeed, those who teach this faith command us not to understand, but to believe it; and the people, who have been trained from childhood to believe this, believe any senseless thing that they may be told. But after men are so stultified that they believe that God is hanging in the corner or is sitting in the piece of pap.

which the priest is giving them in a spoon, that it is useful for this life and for the life to come to kiss a board or the relics and to place tapers before them, they are called upon to do military service, and there they are deceived any way they are to be deceived, by being compelled first of all to swear on the Gospel (which prohibits swearing) that they will do what is prohibited in this Gospel, and then, by teaching them that it is not a sin to kill men by the command of the authorities, but that it is a sin not to obey the authorities, and so forth.

Thus the deception of the soldiers, which consists in this, that they are impressed with the idea that it is possible without sinning to kill men by command of the authorities, does not stand alone, but is connected with a whole system of deceptions, without which this particular deception would be ineffective.

Only a man who is completely stupefied by that false faith, called Orthodox, which is given out to him as being Christian, is able to believe that it is no sin for a Christian to enter the army, promising blindly to obey any man who will consider himself higher in rank, and, at the command of another man, to learn to kill and to commit this most terrible crime, which is prohibited by all the laws.

A man who is free from the deception of the so-called Orthodox, pseudo-Christian faith will never believe this.

For this reason the so-called sectarians, that is, the Christians who reject the doctrine of Orthodoxy and acknowledge Christ's teaching, as it is expounded in the Gospels, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount, never fall a prey to this deception, and have always refused to do military service, recognizing it as incompatible with Christianity and preferring to suffer all kinds of tortures, as is now done by hundreds and thousands of men,—in Russia by the Dukhobors and Milkers; in Austria by the Nazarenes; in Sweden, Switzerland, and

Germany by the Evangelists. The government knows this and so follows nothing with such terror and attention as that the general ecclesiastic deception, without which its power is not possible, shall be practised from earliest childhood on all the children and shall be constantly maintained in such a way that not one man can escape it. The government permits anything, drunkenness and debauchery (it not only permits, but even encourages drunkenness and debauchery,—it helps in the stultification), but it is violently opposed to allowing men to free themselves from the deception and free others from it.

The Russian government practises this deception with particular cruelty and harshness. It commands all its subjects, threatening them with punishment in case of non-compliance, to have all their children baptized, while they are babes, into the deceptive, so-called Orthodox faith. When the children are baptized, that is, are considered Orthodox, they are, under threat of criminal prosecution, prohibited from discussing the faith into which they were baptized without their will, and for such a discussion of the faith, as well as for departing from it and passing over to another faith, they are subject to punishments.

So it cannot be said of all the Russians that they believe in the Orthodox faith,—they do not know whether they believe or not, because they were turned into that faith when they were still babes, and because they hold to this enforced faith through fear of punishment. All the Russians are caught into Orthodoxy through fell deception and are kept in it through cruel violence.

By making use of the power which it has, the government produces and maintains the deception, and the deception maintains its power.

And so the only means for freeing men from all the calamities consists in freeing them from that false faith



which is inculcated upon them by the government, and in impressing upon them the true Christian teaching, which is concealed from them by this false doctrine. The true Christian teaching is very simple, clear, and accessible, as Christ Himself has said. But it is simple and accessible only when a man is free from that lie in which we are all brought up, and which is given out to us as divine.

It is impossible to fill a vessel with what is important, if it is already filled with what is useless. It is necessary first to pour out what is useless. Even so it is with the acquisition of the true Christian teaching. We must first understand that all the stories about how God created the world six thousand years ago, and how Adam sinned, and how the human race fell, and how the son of God and God Himself, born of a virgin, came into the world and redeemed it, and all the fables of the Bible and of the Gospel, and all the lives of the saints, and the stories of miracles and relics, are nothing but a coarse mixing up of the superstitions of the Jewish nation with the deceptions of the clergy. Only for a man who is completely free from these deceptions can the simple and clear teaching of Christ, which demands no interpretations and is self-comprehensible, be accessible and comprehensible.

This teaching says nothing about the beginning or the end of the world, nor of God and His intentions, in general nothing about what we cannot know and need not know, but speaks only of what a man has to do in order to be saved, that is, in order in the best manner possible to pass the life into which he has come in this world, from his birth to his death. For this purpose we need only treat others as we wish to be treated. In this alone does the law and the prophets consist, as Christ has said. To do so, we need no images, no relics, no divine services, no priests, no sacred histories, no catechisms, no governments, but, on the contrary, a liberation from all that, — because only the man who is free from those fables

which the priests give out to him as the only truth, and who is not bound to other people by promises to act as they want him to act, can treat others as he wishes to be treated by them. Only in that case will a man be able to do, not his own will, nor that of others, but the will of God.

But the will of God consists, not in fighting and oppressing others, but in recognizing all men as brothers and serving one another.

Such are the thoughts that your letter evoked in me. I shall be very glad if they shall contribute to the elucidation of the questions in which you are interestéd.

*1899.*

## WHO IS TO BLAME?

(On the Transvaal War)

. . . It gives me pleasure to answer you, because your pamphlets are written very well and very sincerely, with the exception of the third, in regard to which I agree with your relatives. That pamphlet is weak, not because it is too blunt, but because it does not bring out with sufficient clearness the repellent features of one of the most disgusting, if not comical, representatives of emperorship, — William II.

But no matter how well your articles are written, I do not agree with their subject matter; I do not exactly disagree, but I cannot condemn that which you condemn.

If two men having got drunk in an inn come to blows while playing cards, I will not make up my mind to condemn one of them, no matter how convincing the proofs of the other may be. The cause of the bad acts of one or the other does not by any means lie in the justice of one of them, but in this, that, instead of working or resting calmly together, they found it necessary to drink wine and play cards in the inn. Similarly, when I am told that in any kind of a war which has broken out it is exclusively one party that is to blame, I can never agree to this. We may admit that one side has acted worse, but the discussion as to which side acts worse does in no way explain the underlying cause of why such a terrible, cruel, and inhuman phenomenon as war is taking place. The causes are quite obvious to any man who does not shut his eyes, as in the present Transvaal War so also in

all the late wars. There are three such causes: (1) the unequal distribution of property, that is, the robbing of one class of people by another, (2) the existence of a military class, that is, of people educated and destined for murder, and (3) the false, for the most part consciously deceptive, religious teaching, in which the young generations are forcibly educated.

And so I think that it is not only useless, but even harmful to look for the cause of wars in a Chamberlain, a William, and so forth, thus concealing from ourselves the true causes, which are much nearer, and in which we ourselves take part. We can only be indignant with a Chamberlain or a William, and scold them; but our anger and scolding will only make bad blood for us, without changing the course of events: a Chamberlain and a William are blind tools of forces which lie far behind them. They act as they must act, and cannot act otherwise. The whole of history is a series of just such acts of all the political persons as the Transvaal War, and so it is quite useless and even impossible to be angry at them and condemn them, when we see the true causes of their activity and when we feel that we are ourselves to blame for this or that activity of theirs, according to how we look upon the three fundamental causes which I have mentioned.

So long as we are going to enjoy exclusive wealth, while the masses of the nation are crushed by labour, there will always be wars for markets, for gold fields, and so forth, which we need in order to maintain our exclusive wealth. So much the more inevitable will be the wars, so long as we are going to take part in the military class and will permit its existence,—if we will not struggle with all our strength against it. We either ourselves serve in the military caste, or recognize it not only as indispensable, but also as praiseworthy, and then, when war breaks out, we accuse some Chamberlain of it,

and so forth. Above all else, there will be war, so long as we are going to preach, and even without indignation and provocation to permit, that corruption of Christianity, which is called the ecclesiastic Christianity, and under which is possible a Christ-loving army, the blessing of cannon, and the recognition of war as Christian and just. We teach our children this religion and ourselves profess it, and then say either that Chamberlain or Krüger is to blame, because people are killing one another.

For that reason I do not agree with you and cannot rebuke the blind tools of ignorance and evil, but see the cause in manifestations in which I myself can contribute to the diminution or increase of evil. To contribute to the fraternal equalization of property, to make the least use of the privileges which have fallen to my share; in no way to take part in military affairs, to destroy that hypnosis by means of which people, turning into hired murderers, think that they are doing a good thing, if they serve in the army; and chiefly, to profess the rational Christian teaching, trying one's best to destroy that cruel deception of the false Christianity in which the young generations are forcibly brought up,—in this threefold work, it seems to me, lies the duty of every man who wishes to serve the good and who is justly provoked at that terrible war, which provoked you, too.

*Moscow, December 4, 1899.*

## ON SUICIDE

THE question as to whether a man has the right to kill himself is incorrectly put. There can be no question as to right. If he can, he has the right. I think that the possibility of killing oneself is a safety-valve. With this possibility a man has no right (here the expression "to have right" is in place) to say that life is intolerable to him. It is impossible for me to live, so I will kill myself, and then there will be no one to complain of the intolerableness of life. Man is given the opportunity to kill himself, and so he can (has the right to) kill himself, and he continually makes use of it, killing himself in duels, in war, by means of dissipation, whiskey, tobacco, opium, and so forth. The question can be only as to whether it is rational and moral (the rational and the moral always coincide) to kill oneself.

No, it is not rational; it is just as irrational as to cut off the suckers of a plant which you want to kill: the plant will not perish, but will only grow irregularly.

Life is not destructible, — it is outside time and space, and so death can only change the form, cut off its manifestation in this life. And having cut it off in this world, I, in the first place, do not know whether its manifestation in another world will be more agreeable to me, and, in the second place, I deprive myself of the possibility of learning and acquiring for my ego everything which it could acquire in this world. Besides, and above all else, it is irrational, because, interrupting my life, — because it seems disagreeable to me, — I only show that I have a

perverse conception of the destiny of this life, by assuming that its destiny is my enjoyment, whereas its destiny is, on the one hand, personal perfection, on the other, a ministration to that work which is accomplished by the whole life of the world. For the same reason suicide is immoral: life is given to man in its entirety, and he is given the possibility of living to a natural death, only on condition of his ministration to the life of the world, and he, making use of life only to the extent to which it is agreeable to him, refuses to serve the world with it, the moment it becomes disagreeable to him, whereas, in all probability, this ministration began at the very moment when life became unpleasant. Every work at first appears unpleasant.

In Óptin Cloister a paralyzed monk, who had the use of only his left arm, lay for more than thirty years on the floor. The doctors said that he must suffer very much, but he not only did not complain of his condition, but constantly making the sign of the cross, looking at the images, and smiling, expressed his gratefulness to God and joy at that spark of life which was glowing within him. Tens of thousands of visitors saw him, and it is hard to imagine all the good which spread over the world from this man, who was deprived of every possibility of work. No doubt this man did more good than thousands and thousands of healthy people, who imagine that they are serving the world in various institutions.

So long as there is life in man, he can perfect himself and serve the world. But he can serve the world only by perfecting himself, and he can perfect himself only by serving the world.

1900 (?).

## A MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(From a letter to Mr. Edward Garnett<sup>1</sup>)

WHEN I read your letter it seemed to me impossible that I could send any message to the American people. But thinking over it at night, it came to me that, if I had to address the American people, I should like to thank them for the great help I have received from their writers who flourished about the fifties. I would mention Garrison, Parker, Emerson, Ballou, and Thoreau, not as the greatest, but as those who, I think, specially influenced me. Other names are Channing, Whittier, Lowell, Walt Whitman — a bright constellation, such as is rarely to be found in the literatures of the world.

And I should like to ask the American people why they do not pay more attention to these voices (hardly to be replaced by those of financial and industrial millionaires, or successful generals and admirals), and continue the good work in which they made such hopeful progress.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted, with the editor's permission, from *The North American Review*, April, 1901.



## THREE LETTERS ON REASON, FAITH, AND PRAYER

### 1

. . . You ask what my Christian confession of faith consists in.

You have read the *Short Exposition of the Gospel* and so you know how I understand Christ's teaching.

But if you wish to know in what I see the chief meaning of the teaching, which I should like to transmit to all men, in which I should like to see all children educated, — I would say that it consists in this, that man came into the world, not by his own will, but by the will of Him who sent him into the world. But for man to know what He who sent him into the world wants of him, — He implanted in him reason, by means of which man, if he only wants to, is always able to know the will of God, that is, what is wanted of him by Him who sent him into the world.

The Pharisees and scribes of our time always say that we must not believe our reason, because it will deceive us, but that we should believe them, and they will not deceive us. But they tell an untruth. If we are to believe men and, as it says in the Gospel, the traditions of men, we shall all creep in different directions, like blind puppies, and shall hate one another, as is really the case at present: a church Christian hates a Mohammedan, a Mohammedan hates a Christian, and the Christians hate one another, — an Orthodox hates a Catholic or an Old Believer, an Old Believer hates an Orthodox, and so forth.

But if we hold what reason dictates to us, we shall all unite, because reason is one and the same with all men, and nothing but reason unites men and does not hinder the manifestation of mutual love, which is proper to men.

Reason unites us, not only with men who live at the same time with us, but also with those who lived thousands of years before, and with those who will live after us. Thus we make use of everything produced by the reason of Isaiah, Christ, Buddha, Socrates, Confucius, and all other men who lived before us and believed in reason and served it. Do to others as you wish that others should do to you; do not avenge evil done to you by men, but pay good for evil; be continent, be chaste; not only do not kill men, but be not even angry with them; live in peace with all men, and many things more,—all that is the production of reason, and all that has been preached alike by Buddhists, and Confucianists, and Christians, and Taoists, and the Greek and Egyptian sages, and is preached by all good men of our time, and all agree upon all that.

And so, I repeat, the chief significance of the Christian teaching, in my opinion, consists in what is expressed in the Gospel in the parable about the labourers in the vineyard who were given the use of the vineyard, for which they were to pay the master, but they imagined that the vineyard was their own; and in the parable about the talents. The meaning is this, that men must do the will of Him who sent them into life, and this will consists in this, that men, as is said in another place, should be as perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect, that is, should as much as possible approach this higher perfection.

That God's will is only this we are also shown by our reason, and we are shown this so clearly that there can be no discussion about it, and no doubt. Any man who will think about it cannot help but see that in all affairs of life a man may meet and does meet obstacles, and

only in one thing does a man encounter no obstacles,—in his desire to perfect himself, to purify his soul from evil, and to do good to everything living. Nor is it stopped, or impaired, or interfered with by death, which stops, impairs, and deprives of meaning every other worldly matter. Death does not stop or impair this matter, because a man who does the will of Him who sent him, knowing that the work done by him is needed by the Master, calmly does it here so long as he has the strength to do it, and he knows that death does not destroy him, nor his relation to the Master, and that there, though in a different form, he will be in dependence on the Master and will have the same joy of a greater and ever greater participation in the life and the work of the Master, that is, God.

Thus do I understand Christ's teaching, and thus I should like to see all men understand it and the children brought up, so that they may not take upon faith what they are told about God and about life, but may believe what they believe, not because this is given out as the utterances of the prophets and of Christ, but because their reason tells them so. Reason is older and more reliable than all Scriptures and traditions,—it existed even before there were any traditions and Scriptures, and it is given to each of us directly from God.

The words of the Gospel that every sin will be forgiven except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, in my opinion, have direct reference to the assertion that we must not trust reason. Indeed, if we do not trust reason, which is given us from God, whom shall we believe? Shall we believe those men who want to make us believe what is inconsistent with reason, which is given from God? . . .

## 2

. . . You ask what can give a feeble, corrupt, and debauched man, such as we all are, amidst the tempta-

tions surrounding him on all sides, the strength to live a Christian life?

Instead of answering, and before answering, this question, I will ask what it really means. We are so used to this question that it appears to us quite natural and intelligible, whereas it is not only not natural and not even intelligible, but, on the contrary, extremely surprising and strange for any sensible man who is not brought up in the superstitions of the church faith.

Why is it that a blacksmith who is forging iron, or a ploughman who is ploughing a field, does not ask where he shall find the strength for the achievement of the work undertaken by him, but does it to the best of his ability, errs and tries to correct his error, gets tired, stops, puts his work aside for awhile, rests himself, and again takes up his work? Is not every slave of God who tries to live a Christian life in the same condition? Even so a man, if he is sincere, will to the best of his ability live a Christian life, do the will of God, and, if he shall make mistakes, will mend his ways, and he will grow tired, and rest, and again take up the same business of his life,—approaching to the best of his ability the perfection of the heavenly Father which is pointed out to him.

The question as to where a man is to find the strength for a Christian life shows only that people have been assured that there are certain special means by means of which people may, without an hourly intensification of struggle, falls, repentance, risings, and again falls, and again risings, attain the necessary strength for a good, holy life. This superstition, that a man does not approach perfection by his own slow efforts, but is able to purify himself at once and become holy, is one of the most terrible and most harmful delusions, and it is this that is energetically preached by all the ecclesiastic faiths. Some assure their disciples that by means of the sacra-

ments of baptism, confession, and communion a man may free himself from sins; others assert that what saves a man from sins is his belief in redemption, in this, that Christ the God purified us with His blood. Either of them teach that we are also freed by supplicatory prayer to God about His forgiving us our sins and making us good, and not by our trying to become better.

This superstition is very harmful, because it includes a deception.

This deception, in the first place, is this, that a man may become entirely pure and holy, whereas this is impossible for a live man. A man cannot be perfect and sinless,—he can only more or less approach perfection, basing on this approach the whole meaning of his life. (I even think that life after death will consist, though in an entirely different form, in the same approach to perfection.) In this personal effort at perfection does the whole meaning and joy of life consist. And so, if perfection were to be attained by external means, we should be deprived of the very essence of life.

The deception, in the second place, is this, that man's forces are drawn away from what he ought to do,—to work over himself,—and are directed upon what he ought not to do. For us to depend on this, that the sacraments, or the belief in redemption, or prayer will contribute to our perfection, is the same as though a blacksmith, with iron and hammer in his hands, and having an anvil and a hot fire, should, instead of striking the iron, be trying to find a means for forging it, or praying to God to give him strength for work.

We could pray to God and try to invent means for perfecting ourselves, only if certain obstacles were put in our way and we ourselves did not have the strength to overcome them. In the matter of perfection, or of the Christian life, or of the fulfilment of God's will, God does not demand of us what we cannot do, but, on the contrary,

has seen to it that we have everything we need for the fulfilment of His will.

We are here, in this world, as in a hostelry, in which the master has arranged everything which we, the travellers, need, and has gone away, leaving instructions as to how we should act in this temporary refuge. Everything we need is at hand; so what means are we to discover and what are we to ask about? All we have to do is to fulfil what we are prescribed to do. Even so it is in the spiritual world, — everything we need is given to us, and the rest depends upon us.

Of course, if we want to be saints at once, or if we wish to feel ourselves justified, and, besides, rich, — if we wish that we and our friends should never grow ill or die, that we may always have good crops, and that our enemies may be destroyed, — we must ask God for all those things, just as they ask for these things in our churches. But God has intended nothing of the kind for us: He not only has not prescribed to us to be righteous and sinless, but, on the contrary, has given us life, the only meaning of which is that we should free ourselves from our sins and approach Him; and He has not intended us to be rich, without disease and immortal, but has given us trials, — poverty, diseases, the death of our friends, and our own death, — for the very purpose that we might not place all our life in wealth, health, and this temporal life, but might place it in the service of Him; and He has given us enemies, not that we might desire their ruin, but that we might learn to destroy the enemies with love; He has given us a law with which we fare well, if we fulfil it. Thus we have no reason to invent any special means of salvation or to ask God for anything. Everything we need is given to us, if we shall only follow the indications of our conscience and of God, as expressed in the Gospel.

In the third place, the deception is this, — and by this

it is harmful, — that men, having come to believe that they are not able with their own strength to do God's will and live well, stop working over themselves, and not only stop working, but also lose the possibility of perfecting themselves. A man need but assure himself that he cannot do what he should do, and his arms will drop, and he will indeed be unable to do what is necessary. Let a man convince himself that he is sick, and he will grow sick. Obsessed persons yell for the very reason that they believe they are obsessed. People who drink incontinently do not reform, because they are convinced that they cannot control themselves. There does not exist a more immoral and pernicious doctrine than that a man cannot perfect himself by his own efforts.

This reflection that for a good Christian life one's own efforts are not sufficient, but that some external force is needed, is precisely like the one according to which (I wrote you about it in my first letter) reason does not suffice for the cognition of the truth, but external proofs are needed. There it is assumed in advance that there is something which can give a man strength to live a Christian life and do God's will; and here it is assumed in advance that there exists something by which a man can know for certain that what is said to him is the undoubted truth. It is assumed that there exists a means for cognizing truth, the full and perfect truth, — outside of the personal effort of the mind. But that is as impossible as to see light without eyes. The truth is what is cognized through effort and cannot be cognized in any other way. The truth which is cognized by human reason can never be perfect: it can only approach perfect truth. Thus the truth may be the highest truth accessible to man at a given time, but can never be perfect for all times, — the indubitable truth. No proposition can be such a perfect truth for all time, for this reason, if for no other, that life, both the life of all humanity and that of each individual,

passes and even consists in the attainment of more and more perfect truth.

The perverse and insipid conception that human reason cannot with its own efforts approach truth is due to the same terrible superstition according to which a man cannot without any aid from without approach the fulfilment of God's will. The essence of this superstition is this, that the full, complete truth was revealed by God himself: for the Jews it was revealed on Mount Sinai, and later by various prophets; for the Christians it was revealed by Christ, the apostles, ecumenical councils, the church; for the Brahmins it was revealed in the Vedas; for the Buddhists—in the Tripitaka; for the Mohammedans—in the Koran. This superstition is terrible, in the first place, because it distorts the very conception of the truth; in the second place, because, having once recognized as the indubitable truth all those insipidities and abominations which are accepted as God's revelation in the Scriptures, people are obliged still more to distort common sense, in order to justify all these abominations and insipidities; and, in the third place, because, by recognizing the infallible external revelation as the source of truth, a man ceases to believe in the one means for recognizing the truth,—the efforts of his mind. A man who acts thus does what a man would do in search of a path, if, instead of making every effort for the discovery of the path, he should close his eyes and entrust himself to the guidance of the first man offering to lead him.

We are told: "How can we believe our reason, since we see that men who are guided by reason err? The men who are guided by reason,—the Protestants,—break up into an endless number of denominations, and even one man, in entrusting himself to his reason, passes from one teaching to another. Consequently," we are told, "reason may err, and it is impossible to depend upon it."



Why so? When a man believes in something, and his reason does not show him anything more true, he knows what for him is the highest truth, and he is right; then he learns a still higher truth, and he is again right in that he acknowledges it. Even so he is right when he recognizes a still higher and purer truth. That which is the highest, clearest, truest that a man can see or imagine to himself is for him the truth.

Very likely it would be very well and very desirable if all men recognized one and the same perfect truth all at once (though, if this happened, life would at once stop); but even if we admit that this would be desirable, not everything is done as we desire it. It may, most likely, seem desirable to irrational men that people should not be sick, or that there should be a means for curing all diseases, or that all people should speak one language; but all that will not happen because we imagine that all men will be cured by our medicine, or that all men will speak and understand Russian. If we imagine this, we shall only make things worse for ourselves, just as we make things worse for ourselves if we imagine that the full and eternal truth is revealed to us in Scripture, in tradition, and in the church. It was possible to imagine that in the beginning of Christianity, when one faith seemed possible; but in our time, when side by side we can see men of the most varied creeds, all of whom imagine that the full and eternal truth was revealed to them, and not to us, it is particularly stupid to imagine that we, who were born in our faith, and no others, are in possession of the full truth, even as this is imagined by the Buddhists, Mohammedans, Catholics, Taoists, and others. Such a false imagination is particularly harmful, because it disunites men more than anything else. Men ought to unite more and more, as Christ teaches and our reason and heart show to us, but such doctrines about revelation more than anything else disunite men.

People ought, besides, to understand that if a man believes in revelation, he does so only because reason tells him that he must believe in such or such a revelation,—Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Christian. Whether we will it or not, no truth can enter a man's soul against his reason. Reason is like a sifter which is attached to the threshers and fan, so that no grain can be received, except through this sifter. It may be that dirt is passing through the bolter, but there is no other way for obtaining the grain. If we imagine that we can have pure grain without sifting, we shall be deceiving ourselves and shall feed on dirt instead of bread, as is, indeed, the case with the churchmen.

Thus we must not imagine that everything is taking place as we want it to, but must understand that everything is done as established by God. But God has established human life in such a way that men cannot recognize the whole truth, but constantly approach it, and, in proportion as they understand the one truth more and more clearly, they approach each other more and more.

You also ask for my opinion as to Christ's personality, whether I regard Him as God; you ask me about His birth, about the life after death, about whom I mean by the Pharisees and the scribes, and about communion.

Christ I regard as a man like all of us; to regard Him as God I consider the greatest blasphemy and an obvious proof of paganism. To recognize Christ as God is to renounce God.

Christ I regard as a man, but His teaching I consider divine, to the extent to which it expresses divine truths. I do not know a higher teaching. It has given me life, and I try to follow it as well as I can.

About the birth of Christ I know nothing, and I do not need to know.

About the life after death we know that it exists, that

life does not end in death ; but it is not given to us to know what this life will be, and we do not need to know.

By the Pharisees I understand preëminently the clergy, by the scribes I understand the learned who do not believe in God.

In regard to the eating of the body and the drinking of the blood, I think that this is a most unimportant passage in the Gospel, and that it signifies either the attainment of the teaching or a reminiscence, but in neither case is it of any importance, and in no case does it mean what the church fanatics understand by it. I have expounded my understanding of this passage as well as I could in my *Short Exposition of the Gospel*.

## 3

In my last letter I wrote to you on the uselessness of prayer, both as to the realization of our wishes in relation to the events of the external world, and also for the internal world,—for our perfection. I am afraid that through my fault you will not understand me as I should wish to be understood, and so I will add a few words about this subject,—namely, about prayer.

For external events : for this, that there should be rain, or that a man whom I love should live, or that I should be well and not die,—for this I cannot pray, because these events take place according to laws established by God once and for all, and in such a way that, if we act as we should, they are always beneficent for us. It is the same as though a good man should build me a house with strong walls and a roof which protect me, and I should whimsically wish to expand or change the position of the walls and should ask for that.

For our inner perfection we cannot pray, because everything we need for our perfection has been given to us, and we neither need nor can add anything to it.

But the fact that supplicatory prayer has no meaning does not mean that it is impossible and unnecessary to pray. On the contrary, I think that it is impossible to live well without prayer, and that prayer is a necessary condition of a good, calm, and happy life. In the Gospel we are shown how to pray and what a prayer should consist in.

In every man there is a spark of God, God's spirit,—every man is God's son. Prayer consists in this, that, having renounced everything worldly, everything which may distract my sentiments (the Mohammedans do well, when, upon entering a mosque or beginning to pray, they close their eyes and ears with their fingers), I evoke in myself the divine principle. The best way for doing this is to do what Christ teaches: to enter into the closet and to shut the door, that is, to pray in complete solitude, be it in the closet, in the forest, or in the field. A prayer consists in this, that, renouncing everything worldly, everything external, we evoke in ourselves the divine part of our soul, to transfer ourselves into it, by means of it to enter into communion with Him of whom it is a part, to recognize ourselves as God's slaves, and to scrutinize our soul, our acts, our desires according to the demands, not of the external conditions of the world, but of this divine part of the soul.

And such a prayer is not an idle emotion and excitation, such as are produced by congregational prayers with their singing, pictures, illumination, and sermons, but always helps life, by changing and directing it. Such a prayer is a confession, a verification of former acts, and an indication of the direction of future acts. Suppose I am insulted, and I foster ill-will toward a man and wish him evil, or do not wish to do him the good which I can do him; or I have lost property or a dear friend; or I live, acting contrary to my belief. If I do not pray as is proper, but continue to live among distractions, I am not

freed from that painful feeling of ill-will for the man who has offended me ; even so the loss of property or of a dear friend will poison my life ; and, in getting ready to act contrary to the dictates of my conscience, I shall be agitated. But if I verify myself with the aid of myself and of God, everything will be changed, — I will accuse myself and not my enemy, and will seek for an opportunity to do him good ; my losses I will accept as a trial, and I will endeavour with humility to bear them, and in this will I find my consolation ; and I shall be able to understand my acts ; I will not, as before, conceal from myself that disagreement between my life and my faith, but will, repenting, try to bring them to an agreement, and in this endeavour I shall find peace and joy.

But you will ask : “ In what should a prayer consist ? ”

Christ gave us a sample of a prayer in the Lord’s Prayer, and this prayer, which reminds us of the essence of our life, which is, to be in the will of the Father and to fulfil it, and of our usual sins, — the condemnation of our brothers and our unforgiveness toward them, — and of the chief perils of our life, the temptations, remains until now the best and most complete of all the prayers which I know.

But, in addition to this prayer, a true, solitary prayer consists also of everything which in the words of other sages and saintly men, or in our own, takes our soul back to the recognition of our divine principle, to a more vivid and clear expression of the demands of our conscience, that is, to the divine nature.

A prayer is a scrutiny of our past and present acts according to the highest demands.

Thus I not only do not deny solitary prayer, which reestablishes the divinity of our soul, but even consider it a necessary condition of the spiritual, that is, of the true, life. What I deny is the supplicatory and congre-

gational — the blasphemous — prayer, with its singing, images, tapers, and even performances.

I often wonder how this congregational and supplicatory prayer can exist among men who call themselves Christian, when Christ said distinctly and definitely that we should pray in solitude and that we must not ask for anything, because “before ye open your mouth, your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.”

I will tell you about myself, — not at all thinking that this is good for all men and that all men should do so, — that I have long ago accustomed myself to praying every day in the morning in solitude. And my daily prayer is as follows :

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.” And after that I add from the Epistle of John : “Thy name is love. God is love. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. No man hath seen God at any time, but if we love one another, He dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God ; for God is love.”

“Thy kingdom come.” And I add : “Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. The kingdom of God is within you.”

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” And with this I ask myself whether I truly believe that I am in God and God in me, and whether I believe that my life consists in increasing love in myself. I ask myself whether I am mindful of this, that to-day I live and to-morrow I am dead, and whether it is true that I do not want to live for my personal desire and human glory, but

only in order to do God's will. And I add Christ's words from the three gospels: "Not my will, but Thine be done; and not what I will, but what Thou wilt, and not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

"Give us this day our daily bread." I add: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. Deny thyself, and take up thy cross daily, and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." I add: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

"And lead us not into temptation." I add: "Beware of temptations, — lust, ambition, ill-will, gluttony, fornication, human glory. Do not do thine alms in the presence of men, and let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Rejoice because they insult and shame you."

"But deliver us from evil." I add: "Beware of evil which cometh from the heart: evil thoughts, murder (every ill-will toward man), theft (the use of what you have not earned), fornication, adultery (even in thought), false witness, blasphemy."

I conclude the prayer again with words from the Epistle of John: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Thus I pray every day, applying the words of this prayer to my acts and to my mental state, — at times with more soulfulness than at others.

Besides this prayer, I pray also when I am alone, — I read the thoughts of wise and holy men, not Christians and the ancients alone, and I think and search before

God for that evil which is in my heart, and try to pluck it out.

I also try to pray in life, when I am with people, and I am seized with passions. I then try to remember what took place in my soul during my solitary prayer, and the more sincere my prayer was, the easier I withstand the evil.

That is all I wanted to tell you about prayer, so that you may not think that I deny it.

*Moscow, January 8, 1901.*



## TO THE TSAR AND HIS ASSOCIATES

AGAIN murders, again street rioting, again there will be executions, again terror, false accusations, threats, and rage on one side, and again hatred, a desire for revenge, and a readiness for sacrifice on the other. Again all the Russians have divided into two hostile camps and commit and are getting ready to commit the greatest crimes.

It is very likely that the present agitation will be suppressed, though it is also possible that these soldiers, policemen, and officers of the army, upon whom the government relies so much, will comprehend that what they are compelled to do is the great crime of fratricide, and will refuse to obey. But even if the present agitation shall be suppressed, it cannot be put out, but will be fanned more and more in a secret form, and will inevitably sooner or later manifest itself with increased force and will produce still worse sufferings and crimes.

What is it for? What is it for, since it is so easy to be freed from it?

We turn to all of you who have power, from the Tsar, the members of the Imperial Council, the ministers, to the relatives, — the uncles, brothers, friends of the Tsar, — who are likely to have an influence upon him; we do not turn to you as to enemies, but as to brothers, who — whether you wish it or not — are inseparably connected with us in such a way that all the sufferings which we undergo reëcho in you, the more painfully if you feel that you might have removed these sufferings and did not do so, — see to it that an end is put to this situation!

To you, or to the majority of you, it seems that all that is taking place because amidst the regular current of life there appear restless, dissatisfied people, who stir up the masses and interfere with this regular current, that it is only these people who are to blame for everything, that it is necessary to quiet and bridle these restless, dissatisfied people, and then everything will be well, and that nothing need be changed.

But if the whole matter were due to the restless and bad people, all that would be necessary to do would be to catch them and shut them up in prisons, or to execute them, and then all the agitation would come to an end. But these people have for more than thirty years been caught, imprisoned, executed, deported by the thousand, and their number keeps increasing, and the dissatisfaction with the existing order of life not only keeps growing, but is spreading all the time and has taken hold of millions of the labouring people, a vast majority of the whole nation. It is evident that the dissatisfaction is not due to the restless and bad people, but to something else. And you, governing men, need but for a minute take your attention away from the sharp struggle with which you have been busy, — stop thinking naïvely, as was expressed in the late circular of the minister of internal affairs, that “the police need only in time disperse the crowd, and shoot into it if it does not disperse, in order that all be calm and quiet,” — you need only stop believing this, to be able to see clearly the cause which produces the dissatisfaction among the masses and finds its expression in agitations, which are constantly assuming wider and deeper dimensions.

The cause is this, that, in consequence of the unfortunate, accidental murder of the Tsar who freed the masses, committed by a small group of men, who falsely imagined that they served the nation in this way, the government decided to keep from going ahead by renounc-

ing more and more the improper conditions of life under the despotic forms of government, and, imagining that salvation lay in those same coarse, obsolete forms, has not only not advanced in the last twenty years, in conformity with the general development and greater complexity of life, or been standing still, but has been going back, with this retrogressive motion more and more departing from the people and their demands.

Thus it is not the bad, restless people who are to blame, but you yourselves, the rulers, who do not wish to see anything but your own peace for the present moment. It is not a question of defending yourselves at once against an enemy who wishes you evil, — no one wishes you any evil, — but, having come to see the cause of the dissatisfaction of society, of removing it. All people cannot be wishing for discord and hostility; they always prefer to live in concord and love with their brothers. But if they now are agitated and seem to be wishing you ill, this is so because you appear to them as that barrier which deprives not only them, but also the millions of their brothers, of the best possessions of man, — liberty and enlightenment.

For people to stop being agitated and attacking you, so little is needed, and this little is so needed for yourselves, so obviously will give you peace, that it would be remarkable if you did not do it.

Only very little is to be done. What you ought to do is this:

In the first place, make the peasants in all their rights equal with all the other citizens, and so:

(a) Abolish the disconnected, stupid institution of County Council chiefs.

(b) Abolish those special rules which are established for the determination of the relations of the labourers to the employers.

(c) Free the peasants from the oppression of the pass-

ports in going from place to place, and also from the quartering, transportation, and village police duties (ten-men, hundred-men) which lie exclusively upon the peasants.

(*d*) Free them from the unjust obligation of paying other people's debts in consequence of mutual bail, and also from the emancipation payments, which have long ago covered the value of the land purchased.

And (*e*) above all else, abolish the useless, unnecessary, disgraceful corporal punishment, which has been established only for the most industrious, moral, and numerous class of people.

The equalization of the peasantry, which forms the vast majority of the people, in all its rights with the other classes is particularly important, because there can be no permanency and firmness in a social structure in which this majority does not enjoy equal rights with others, but exists in the form of slaves, who are weighed down with special, exclusive laws. Only with an equalization of the rights of the labouring majority with those of all the other citizens, and in its emancipation from disgraceful exceptions, can there be a firm structure of society.

In the second place, you must stop applying the so-called rules of increased protection, which does away with all the existing laws and turns the population over into the power of very frequently immoral, stupid, and cruel chiefs. The non-application of the increased protection is important, because this arrest of the actions of the general laws produces denunciations, and espionage, and encourages and provokes rude force, which is frequently employed against the labourers who are entering into conflicts with their masters and the landowners (nowhere are such tortures practised as where these rules are operative); but chiefly, because only thanks to this terrible measure have they begun more and more frequently to employ capital punishment, which more than anything

else corrupts people, which is contrary to the Christian spirit of the Russian people, which heretofore was not recognized in our law, and which forms the greatest crime, forbidden alike by God and by man's conscience.

In the third place, you must destroy all the barriers in culture, education, and instruction. You must —

(*a*) Make no distinction between the persons of the different classes in admitting them to be educated, and so you must abolish all the prohibitions of reading, instruction, and books, which exist exclusively for the masses, as though all these things were injurious for them.

(*b*) Admit to all the schools the persons belonging to all the nationalities and religions, not excepting the Jews, who for some reason are deprived of this right.

(*c*) Not interfere with the teachers when they carry on the instruction in those languages spoken by the children who attend school.

Above all else, (*d*) permit the foundation and conduct of all kinds of private schools, both lower and higher, by all persons who are desirous of devoting themselves to a pedagogical activity.

The emancipation of culture, education, and instruction from all the oppressions under which they suffer now is important, because it is only these restrictions which keep the labouring masses from freeing themselves from that ignorance which now serves the government as the main argument for the application of these restrictions to the masses. The emancipation of the labouring classes from governmental interference in matters of education would give the masses a chance much more rapidly and usefully to acquire all that knowledge which they need, and not that which is obtruded upon them; and the permission granted to private individuals to open and conduct schools would do away with the constant agitations among the student body, who are dissatisfied with the management of the institutions in which they study now.

If there were no restriction in the foundation of free private schools, the young people who are dissatisfied with the orders in the governmental institutions of learning would go over to those private institutions which would answer their demands.

Finally, in the fourth place, and this is most important, you must abolish all the restrictions of religious freedom. You must:

(a) Abolish all the laws by which every departure from the recognized state church is punished as a crime.

(b) Permit the opening and building of chapels, churches, and meeting-houses by the Old-ritualists, Baptists, Milkers, Stundists, and so forth.

(c) Permit religious gatherings and religious preaching to all the faiths.

(d) Not keep the people of the different faiths from bringing up their children in the confession which they regard as the true one.

It is necessary to do so, because, to say nothing of the truth, worked out by history and science and acknowledged by the whole world, that religious persecutions not only do not obtain their aim, but even produce a reverse action, by strengthening that which they intend to destroy, and to say nothing of this, that the interference of the temporal power in matters of religion produces the most harmful, and, therefore, the worst vice of hypocrisy, which Christ arraigned so vigorously, — the interference of the temporal power in matters of faith hampers both the individual person and the aggregate of men in their attainment of the highest good, — the union of men among themselves. But the union is not attained by a violent and impossible retention of men in the once acquired external confession of the one religious doctrine to which infallibility is ascribed, but only by the free motion of all humanity in its approximation to the one truth, which, therefore, is the only one that can unite men.

Such, we believe, are the most modest and practicable desires of the vast majority of the Russian society. The application of these measures will unquestionably pacify society, and will free it from those terrible sufferings and (what is worse than sufferings) crimes, which will inevitably be committed on both sides, if the government will care only for the suppression of agitations, leaving their causes untouched.

We turn to all of you, — the Tsar, the ministers, the members of the Imperial Council, and the Tsar's nearest friends and advisers, in general to all people in power, — for help in the pacification of society and in its liberation from sufferings and crimes. We turn to you, not as to people of another camp, but as to our involuntary fellows in thought and feeling, and our brothers.

In a society of men who are bound together some cannot fare well, while others fare badly, especially if the majority fares badly. Now all can fare well only when the strongest, most industrious majority, upon which society holds itself, fares well.

Help, then, improve the condition of this majority, especially in what is most important, in its freedom and its enlightenment. Only then will your situation, too, be tranquil and truly good.

This was written by Lev Tolstóy, who, writing this, tried to expound, not merely his own opinion, but the opinion of many most excellent, unselfish, sensible, and kind people, who wish for the same.

*March 15, 1901.*

### THREE LETTERS CONCERNING SHOPOV

LETTER TO THE "FREE THOUGHT," A WEEKLY PUBLISHED  
IN SOFIA, BULGARIA

DEAR SIR:—I thank you for the information about Shopov. Although I was not quite able to understand his speech for the defence, I saw that he is a man who has profound convictions concerning the Christian truth.

He is very young, and so I feel terribly for his sake. God aid him to be, not the soil from which the seed sprouts rapidly, without being able to take firm root, but such as will produce fruit a hundredfold.

The longer I live and think, approaching death, the more I am convinced that the army, that is, the men who are prepared to commit murder, is the cause, not only of all the calamities, but also of all the corruption of manners in the world, and that salvation lies only in what is being done by dear, beloved Shopov (may God strengthen him).

The longer I live, the more I marvel at the blindness of our learned world (at times I think that this blindness is intentional), which offers every imaginable means for the salvation of men from their wretchedness, except the one which will certainly save them from wretchedness and from the terrible sin of murder, by which the existing order holds itself and which we make use of. The only ones who are not blind are the governments, which hold to the murders and so are afraid of Shopovs more than of the armies of their neighbours. You no doubt know Rus-



sian, and so you will forgive me for not answering you in the language in which you write. If you have any communication with dear Shopov, give him, if you please, my love, gratefulness, and respect, and this one piece of advice: let him not insist on his refusal, if he is doing it for the sake of men, and not for God, and let him be guided only by his relation to God.

I shall be very thankful to you, if you will keep me informed as to his future fate.

With the greatest respect, ever ready to serve you.

*May 29, 1901.*

#### LETTER TO G. SHOPOV

DEAR FRIEND GEORGI:— Your letter I received long ago, and I was very happy to receive it, and thank you very much for it, but did not answer it on account of ill health and a mass of work. Please continue to inform me concerning your situation. How do you bear your confinement? Is it severe? Do they admit visitors to you, and let you have books? Also let me know about your family relations: have you any parents? Who are your relatives, and how do they look upon your act? Can I not in some way be useful to you? If it is possible for you, translate your letters for me into Russian, and if not, write as legibly as possible, so that every letter may be made out; I shall then be able to make out the sense. Maybe it is hard for you to read my letters. But I assume that you understand Russian better than we understand Bulgarian. Their having tried you, not for the refusal to do military service, but for non-fulfilment of military orders,— that is what they always do. They cannot do anything else, and I truly pity them. And you, who are in their power and are deprived by them of liberty, must none the less pity them. They feel that truth and God are against them, and they cling to every-

thing to save themselves; but their days are counted. And the terrible revolution which you produce, without storming a Bastille, but by sitting in prison, destroys and will destroy all the present godless structure of life, and will give a chance for the new one to be founded. I have used all my powers in serving God in this, and if it can be transmitted to you, I should like to send you what I have written about it.

I send you my brotherly love.

*August 10, 1901.*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF "FREE THOUGHT," OF SOFIA,  
BULGARIA

DEAR SIR: — From your letter I see that the Bulgarian government is not only coarse and cruel, but also astoundingly stupid (I say, the government, because I am convinced that the lower authorities would not treat this youth, who in any case ought to inspire sympathy and respect, with such barbarism and cruelty, if that did not correspond to the demands and wishes of the higher authorities). It is natural for the governments of the great states, like France and Germany, and for the most abominable government of my own country, to treat cruelly such men as Shopov, who by their lives and acts indicate the path of moral progress on which humanity is walking. They, that is, the governments, can do nothing else, because they are based on rude force, while moral progress consists in substituting for rude force the consciousness of the brotherhood of men, and so the governments are compelled to suppress every manifestation of true progress, which they actually do from a sense of self-preservation. But the small nationalities and states, like Bulgaria, Servia, Switzerland, and others, can obviously not attain anything through rude force. In the struggle with force they will always be crushed by the immeasur-

ably more powerful states, Austria, Germany, England, Russia.

The rôle of the small nationalities does not consist in aping and imitating the larger states, in surrendering themselves to militarism and to all the terrors and cruelties which are connected with it (as may be seen in the small example of Shopov's case), but, being free from the burden and rudeness of militarism, in going ahead, to the best of their abilities, on the path of moral progress, pointing out the path to the larger nations.

Thus Germany did, though not so much in the sense of moral, as of æsthetic and scientific progress, when it was divided up into small duchies and had not yet partaken of the poison of rude force, which is killing it spiritually. Thus acts little Switzerland, showing people an example and showing them the possibility of a union of liberty and social order.

How nice it would be, if your Bulgarian people would come in time to their senses, and, instead of introducing discipline and torturing men, only that they may not fall behind their erring neighbours, who imitate the larger nations, and to be able to fight with them, — how nice it would be if your good, industrious, sensible people should use all their forces in the establishment of liberty and equality for themselves, thus showing an example to the other nations, instead of trying to do what they cannot do, — frightening their neighbours with their disciplined army. How nice that would be!

But acts such as the torture of Shopov only cast disgrace on the government which commits them, and give us a bad opinion of the society which silently endures such dishonourable acts. Shopov is intentionally tortured as a soldier, although he from the start refused to be enlisted in the army, — not through caprice or a lack of a desire to be useful to people, but because military service, which has murder for its aim, is not in agreement

with that Christianity which the nation and the government of Bulgaria profess; and so the trial of Shopov, as having violated discipline as a soldier, is a lie and a deceit, which is practised by the government and its slaves on a defenceless, honest man. Even from the standpoint of the government, which may fear that, if Shopov's refusal is left unpunished, no one will be willing to serve, all the government could do, not only to observe justice, but also from a feeling of self-preservation, is to make him do some public work, which is not in disagreement with his belief.

With the fullest respect, your obedient servant.

*Koréiz, Tauris Government, October 17, 1901.*

## THE TOLSTÓY SOCIETY OF MANCHESTER, ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>

DEAR FRIEND:—You are right in assuming that I must be interested in the “Tolstóy Society.” But I am sorry that there is left in me enough vanity to be interested in it. I have always been of the opinion—and it cannot change—that to be a member of the ancient society, established by God at the beginning of the conscious life of humanity, is more productive for the individual and for humanity, than being a member of limited societies, which are organized by us for the attainment of those ends which we are able to cognize. I think that the preference which we show for our own societies is due to this, that the part which we play in them appears to us much more important than the one which we fulfil in the great society of God. But that is only self-deception: all three kinds of activity, mentioned by you in your letter, are more certainly attained by a man who considers himself to be a member of the great society of God, than by one who is a member of the “Tolstóy Society.” Such a man, if he is sincere,—as I know that you are,—will, in the first place, disseminate, as well as he can, those ideas which have given him spiritual satisfaction and energy of life, without troubling himself whether they are Tolstóy’s or anybody’s else. In the second place, he will try with all his might to urge people to express their opinions concerning the most important questions of life. In the third place, he will strive

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Russian translation of the English original.

to afford to every one with whom he comes into contact as much joy and happiness as he can; and he will also help those who fall into difficulties from a thorough following of Christ's teaching. A man who belongs to the great society of God will, besides, do many other Christian acts, which are neither foreseen nor determined by the "Tolstóy Society," nor by any other. I suppose there are some advantages in the union of men of similar thoughts into societies; but I think that the disadvantages are much more considerable than the advantages. And so I confess that for me it would be a great loss to change my membership in the great society of God for the apparently useful participation in any human society whatever.

I am sorry, dear friend, to differ from you, but I cannot think otherwise.

*August 15, 1901.*

## LETTER TO AN ORTHODOX PRIEST

DEAR BROTHER:—I am sorry I do not know your patronymic. Your letter has given me much pleasure. You are the fourth priest in whom I find a full agreement, not with my views, but with the essence of Christ's teaching, which in its true significance is accessible to babes and cannot call forth any disagreement. And this gives me pleasure.

There is one thing in your letter which disturbs me. That is your mention of metaphysics and ecclesiasticism. I am afraid that you have formed your own metaphysics, or that you stick to the ecclesiastic metaphysics, which makes it possible for you with your views to remain a priest. From the fact that you have been serving ten years, I conclude that you are still a young man, young enough to be my son, if not my grandson, and so I will take the liberty of giving you an unasked advice as to how, in my opinion, a priest should act, if he has freed himself from superstition and has come to comprehend Christ's teaching in its full significance and wants to follow it. Being in a situation which is incompatible with the practice of Christ's teaching, — such are the situations of the warrior and the priest, — people frequently invent or adopt some complex, intricate system of metaphysics which is to justify their situation. It is against this offence that I should like to guard you. For a Christian there is and there can be no complicated metaphysics. Everything which in the Christian teaching may be called metaphysics consists in a simple, all-comprehensible proposition that all men are the sons of God,

brothers, and so must love the Father and the brothers, and so must act toward others as they would that others should act toward them. I think that every metaphysics above this was invented by the evil one for the purpose of harmonizing his discordant position with the Christian teaching. There are also priests,—I know such,—who, feeling the incompatibility of their position with a pure understanding of Christianity, think that they can justify themselves with this, that in their position they can better struggle against superstitions and spread the Christian truth. I assume that such a position is still more incorrect. In religious matters the end cannot justify the means, for the very reason that the means of departing from the truth destroy every possibility of attaining the end, which consists in the teaching of the truth. But the main thing is, that one has not been called to teach others (Matt. xiii. 8, 9), but only to perfect oneself in the truth and in love. Only by means of this self-perfection (without any thought of others) can a man act upon others.

Pardon me for retorting to what you have not told me and, perhaps, are not even thinking of; but, having received a powerful and joyous impression from your letter, I felt like telling you everything I think about the tragical position of a priest who has come to know the truth, about the best way out from this position, and about the dangers of this position.

The best way out from this position — a heroic issue — is, in my opinion, for the priest to collect his parishioners, to come out on the ambo to them, and, instead of a service and the worship of the images, to bow to the ground before the people, asking their forgiveness for having led them into error. The second way out is the one which ten years ago was chosen by a remarkable man, Priest Appólov, whom I knew from the Vyátka Seminary, and who was serving in the Stávropol Eparchy. He announced



to the bishop that he could not, on account of his changed views, continue to act as a priest. He was called out to Stávropol, and the authorities and the members of his family tormented him so much that he decided to go back to his place; but, staying there less than a year, he was unable to stand it any longer, and again resigned and had himself unfrocked. His wife left him. All these sufferings affected him so much that he died, as a saint, without having changed his convictions and, above all, his love.

That is a second way out; but I know how terribly hard it is, — in consideration of the family relations of every priest and in consideration of the surroundings, — and so I fully understand and by no means condemn a priest who through weakness remains a priest, in spite of his not believing in what he does. One thing I say and allow myself to counsel (precisely the same I advise those Christians to do of whom military service is demanded), and that is, not to use your reason for sophistry, so that it may appear that, while acting badly, you are doing well. Let a man only keep truth before him in all its purity, without compromising with his honesty, and he will find a means of acting in the best manner possible, in accordance with his strength. A priest who understands the true Christian teaching must, in my opinion, like any other Christian, in the first place, strive to know the truth in all its purity and fulness, — independently of his position, — and, in the second, according to his strength, change his position, making it approach the recognized truth. (This approach takes place of itself, if a man is sincere.) To what extent a man approaches it (for a priest this is very hard, because his position is not only far from truth, but even opposed and hostile to it), — to what extent and how a man approaches it, — that is his affair with God, of which outsiders cannot judge.

I send you my brotherly greeting.

*August 15, 1901.*

Your loving brother.

## LETTER TO A FRENCH PASTOR<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SIR: — I received your letter and thank you for the sentiments which you express to me. I also thank you very much for the excerpts from Auguste Sabatier. I am sorry that I know this remarkable man only by name and from references to him. The excerpts quoted by you concerning the comprehension of Christianity prove to me that I could be with him in complete communion of thoughts and feelings, as also with you and all those who share his comprehension.

There is, none the less, one point in which I do not agree with you, and that is, your representation of the necessity of the church, and, therefore, of pastors, that is of people vested with certain authority. I cannot forget verses 8 and 9 of Matt. xxiii., not because these verses are in the Gospel, but because for me it is an obvious truth that there can be no pastors, teachers, guides among Christians, and that it is this very violation of the Gospel law that has until now reduced almost to zero the preaching of the true Christian doctrine.

In my opinion, the chief meaning of the Christian teaching is the establishment of a direct communion between God and man. Every man who takes upon himself the rôle of a mediator in this communion keeps him whom he wants to guide from entering into direct communion with God, and — what is worse still — himself completely departs from the possibility of living in a Christian way.

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Russian translation of the original French letter.

In my opinion, the acme of pride, a sin which more than anything else removes me from God, is to tell myself that I am able to help others to live well and to save their souls. All a man can do, if he strives to follow the Christian teaching, is to try to perfect himself as much as possible (Matt. v. 48), to use all his strength, all his energy, in this self-perfection. That is the only way of influencing one's neighbours and helping them on the path of goodness. If a church exists, its limits are not announced to any one, and no one can know whether he belongs to it or not. All a man can do and hope for is to strive to become a part of it, but no one can be sure that he has become such indeed, and still less can he assume that he has the right and the possibility of leading others. I beg you, dear sir, to pardon the frankness with which I expound my opinion, which is contrary to yours, and to believe my sentiments of sympathy and respect, with which I am always ready to serve you.

*Yásnaya Polyána, August 26, 1901.*

## ON THE FRANCO - RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

(A letter to Pietro Mazzini<sup>1</sup>)

MY answer to your first question, "What does the Russian nation think of the Franco-Russian Alliance?" is this: The Russian nation—the real nation—does not have the slightest conception about the existence of this alliance; but if the masses even knew of it, I am sure that, since all the nations are absolutely alike to them, their common sense, as also their feeling of humanity, would show them that this exclusive alliance with one nation, to the exclusion of every other, can have no other purpose than to draw them into hostility, and perhaps into wars, with other nations, and so this alliance would be most disagreeable to them.

In reply to your question, "Does the Russian nation share the transports of the French nation?" I think I can say that not only does the Russian nation not share these transports (if they exist in reality, which I doubt very much), but if the masses knew everything that is being said and done in France in connection with this alliance, they would more likely experience a sentiment of distrust and antipathy for the nation which without any rational cause suddenly begins to manifest an unexpected and exclusive love for them.

In regard to the third question, "What is the significance of this alliance for civilization in general?" I think I am right in supposing that, since this alliance can

<sup>1</sup>Translated from the Russian rendering of the French letter.

have no other aim than war or the menace of war, directed against other nations, it cannot help but be harmful. As regards the significance of this alliance for the two contracting nationalities, it is clear that, as in the past, so in the future it will be a positive evil for both nations. The French government, the press, and all that part of French society which extols this alliance, have already made, and will be more and more compelled to make, concessions and compromises in the traditions of a free and humane nation, in order to pretend to agree, or actually to agree, with the intentions and sentiments of the most despotic, backward, and cruel government in all of Europe. That has been and will be a great detriment to France, while on Russia this alliance has already had, and will have, if continued, a still more deleterious effect. Ever since this ill-fated alliance, the Russian government, which at one time was ashamed of the opinion of Europe and counted with it, now no longer cares for it, and, conscious of the support of this strange friendship on the part of the nation which is considered to be the most civilized in the world, it is becoming with every day more reactionary, despotic, and cruel. Thus this savage and unfortunate alliance can, in my opinion, have no other than a most negative effect upon the well-being of the two nations, as also upon civilization in general.

*Yásnaya Polyána, September 9, 1901.*

## ON THE STREET RIOTS

I HAVE read the *Popular Pamphlets*. The one about *How the Priests Have Enslaved the People with Christ's Teaching* is beautiful, and I subscribe to it with both my hands. So, too, the pamphlet *About the Stundists* is good.

The pamphlet *About the Street Riots* is very miserable. It is not only immoral, but also impracticable and simply stupid. If I were the government, I would print such pamphlets at government expense and would distribute millions of copies of them. Nothing can more thoroughly undermine or make impossible the people's confidence in the men who share the views expressed there, than such pamphlets.

What the pamphlet proposes is immoral, because, if a soldier has by a whole series of suggestions (hypnosis) been brought to this, that he is put to the necessity of either killing or enduring great suffering, and, besides, his intelligence is so bedimmed that he does not see the sin of murder, a man who would listen to the author of the pamphlet would prepare himself for murder, and would accomplish it, provoked to it by nothing very doubtful, but by the assertions of the author of the pamphlet, that the commission of the murder will make it better for him and for his brothers to live in the world.

What the pamphlet proposes is impracticable, because it is unreasonable to suppose that unarmed, undisciplined men should be able to take the arms away from armed and disciplined men, and if this should happen anywhere,

though there is but one chance in a thousand for it, those men who had seized the arms would immediately be crushed by real troops from other places.

It is stupid, because for men to prepare themselves for murder, if they wish to free themselves from murders and the threat of murder, means to give their enemies the only legitimate reason for using against them every possible act of violence, and even murder, and to justify all those which were committed before.

I think it is superfluous for me to proclaim that I do not agree with the men who share the views of the pamphlet concerning the street riots. I have for almost thirty years been repeating one and the same thing from all sides, namely, that the whole thing consists in the spiritual condition of men, that every act of violence is a sin, and that the violence of those who struggle against violence is madness. And so a sincere man will not confuse me with revolutionists who practise violence; but that an insincere man can calumniate any one he pleases in any way he may wish, — against this no one can protect himself, and there is even no need to do so.

*December 2, 1901.*

## EXPRESSIONS ON THE KISHINÉV TRAGEDY

CABLEGRAM TO THE "NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW"

THE government is to blame, in the first place, for exempting the Jews, as a special caste, from the common rights; in the second, for the forcible inculcation of idolatry, instead of Christianity, on the Russian people.

LETTER TO A RUSSIAN EDITOR

The terrible crime committed in Kishinév has affected me painfully. I partly expressed my relation to this affair in a letter to a Jew, an acquaintance of mine, a copy of which I here enclose.

The other day we sent from Moscow a collective letter to the Mayor of Kishinév, in which we expressed our sentiments in regard to this terrible matter.

It will give me great pleasure to coöperate with you in your volume of collections, and I will try to write something to fit the occasion.

Unfortunately, what I have to say, namely, that the government alone is to blame, not only for the Kishinév riots, but also for all that disorder which has taken possession of a certain small part of the Russian population, — by no means the masses, — unfortunately I cannot say so in a Russian publication.

*May 6, 1901.*



## LETTER TO A JEW

I have received your letter. I have received several such letters. All my correspondents, who write like you, ask me to express my opinion about the Kishinév affair. It seems to me that in these requests there is a certain misunderstanding. It is assumed that my voice has some weight, and so I am asked to express my opinion of such an important event, so complex in its causes, as the awful deed committed in Kishinév.

The misunderstanding consists in demanding of me the activity of a publicist, whereas I am a man all absorbed in one very definite question, which has nothing in common with the appreciation of contemporary events, namely, with the religious question and its application to life. It is just as unreasonable to demand of me a public expression of opinion concerning contemporary events, as to demand it of any specialist who enjoys a certain reputation. I may — and I have done so — make use of some contemporary event for the purpose of illustrating an idea developed by me, but I am absolutely unable, even if I considered this necessary, to express my opinion, as the publicists do, on all contemporary, however important, events. If I had to act in this manner, I should be obliged to express thoughtless or trite ideas, repeating what has been said by others, and then, it is obvious, there would not exist that significance of my opinion, on the basis of which I am asked to express myself.

But as regards my relation to the Jews and the terrible Kishinév affair, I should think that all those who are interested in my world-conception ought to know what it is. My relation to the Jews cannot be any other than that to my brothers, whom I love, not because they are Jews, but because we and they, like all men, are the sons of one Father, God, and this love does not demand any effort of me, since I have met and know very good people among the Jews.

But my relation to the Kishinév crime is also determined of itself by my religious world-conception. Even then, after the first newspaper report, I understood all the horror of what had taken place, and experienced a heavy mixed feeling of pity for the innocent victims of the bestiality of the crowd, of perplexity in regard to the beastliness of these people, who call themselves Christians, of disgust and abhorrence toward those so-called cultured people who stirred up the crowd and sympathized with its deeds, and, above all, of horror before the real culprit, our government, with its stultifying and fanaticizing clergy and with its robber gang of officials. The Kishinév tragedy is only a direct consequence of the propaganda of lies and violence, which the Russian government has conducted with such tension and stubbornness.

But the relation of the government to this event is only a new proof of its coarse egoism, which does not stop before any cruelties, when it is concerned about the suppression of a movement which seems to it to be dangerous, and of its complete indifference — resembling the indifference of the Turkish government to the Armenian atrocities — to the most terrible cruelties, so long as they do not touch its own interests.

This is all I can say *à propos* of the Kishinév affair, but I have said all that before.

But if you ask me what, in my opinion, the Jews should do, my answer again results naturally from that Christian teaching which I try to understand and which I try to follow. The Jews, like any other people, need but this for their good: as much as possible in their lives to follow the universal rule, — to act toward others as they would that others should act toward them, and to struggle with the government, not by means of violence, — this means must be left to the government, — but by means of a good life, which not only excludes every violence against one's neighbour, but even every participation

in violence and all use for one's advantage of the instruments of violence, as established by the government.

This is all — it is both old and well known — I have to say on the occasion of the terrible Kishinév tragedy.

*Yásnaya Polyána, April 27, 1903.*

. . . When the children ask whether those who destroy and loot the property of their neighbours and torment and kill them are doing right, there is but one answer, namely, that such men are great criminals, who violate God's chief law of the brotherhood of all men and of love among themselves.

But if they ask who is to blame for such evil deeds, I should answer that it is the Russian government that is to blame, in the first place, because it deprives the Jews of the most primitive and natural rights and makes of them a separate caste; in the second place, because it inculcates upon the Russian people an idolatrous religion, called Christian Orthodoxy, and, concealing the true Christianity from the people, in every way corrupts them.

But if they ask what the Jews are to do in order to free themselves from these calamities, I should answer that the Jews should do what all people should always do, especially in times of calamities, that is, of trials, — they should try more and more clearly to know God's law and more and more carry out in life God's one and eternal law of union and love, which is expressed in the utterance about doing unto others as we would that others should do to us.

These are all the answers which I can give to your questions and to the questions of your pupils. I shall be very glad, if they satisfy you and them.

*1903.*

## LETTERS SINCE JANUARY, 1902

### ANSWER TO A SWEDISH SOCIETY OF ARTISTS AND SCHOLARS

GENTLEMEN:— The award of the Nobel Prize to some one else, and not to me, was doubly agreeable to me: in the first place, it saved me the hard necessity of disposing in one way or another of the money, which is by all other men considered to be very useful and necessary, but by me a source of every kind of evil; in the second place, it gave some people whom I respect an occasion for expressing their sympathy to me, for which I thank them with all my heart.

*Gåspra, January 20, 1902.*

DEAR ———:— I fully agree with you in what you write. I slowly came to this conviction and now hold it firmly: I have expressed it in my article, *What Is Religion, and in What Does Its Essence Consist?* which Tchertkoff is, no doubt, printing now.

But there is one very important point on which I differ from you: indeed, at the present time, especially with us in Russia, the ecclesiastic and governmental deceptions form the chief obstacle for the establishment of the Christian life or even of an approach to it, but it cannot be said that a struggle with these deceptions forms the chief object of a Christian. The chief object of a Christian, by means of which he attains all ends, among them the one which now confronts one in Russia, is everywhere

and always this one: to kindle his fire and to make it shine before people. But the diversion of a man's whole attention, of all his efforts to some one private purpose, as, for example, to a life of manual labour, to preaching, or, as in the present case, to a struggle with these or those deceptions, is always a mistake, like what a man would do at an inundation, if, instead of letting the water out of the chief source or working on the dam which retains the water, he should busy himself with putting up barriers in his street, without observing that the water will inundate him from some other side.

Having received your letter I intended to write to you, to remind you that in the struggle we must be as wise as the serpents, and as meek as the doves; but that is not enough: we must not for a minute forget the main end and must not abandon ourselves to working for the attainment of some private end. This means not that we should not struggle against the deceptions (knowing that they are the greatest evil we shall do so involuntarily), but that we should struggle against them only when this struggle appears as the result of the general striving after self-perfection. Another comparison: the houses have to be protected against the possibility of catching fire one from another. It is possible to cut a lot of green branches and stick them between the houses, and for a day or two this will apparently be right. But it is also possible to set out a lot of young trees, and when these take root and grow up it will indeed be for all times. It is necessary for our activity to have roots. These roots are in our submission to the will of God, in our personal life, when devoted to self-perfection and the increase of love.

My physical health is still bad, but spiritually I feel very well, and I can work, and do work as well as I can, and more seriously, in view of the near end. I think of you and love you and am afraid for your zeal.

*Gáspra, January 20, 1902.*

. . . Let us become Chuvashes and listen, not to two prophets (there are no prophets), but to two men.

One says to the Chuvash: "Do you feel in yourself anything outside your body?" — Every Chuvash will say that he feels something spiritual, thinking, loving. — Then we shall ask him: "Is the spiritual being which you feel in yourself almighty?" — The Chuvash will say that it is not, that he feels that this being is limited. — Then we shall say to him: "But if the being which you recognize in yourself is limited, there must be a being which is unlimited. This unlimited being is God, whose essence you feel in yourself limited, and who, as an unlimited being, embraces you in such a way that you are in Him." — Thus will the first man speak, without asserting about himself that he is from God, that he is a prophet, but only asserting what everybody knows and may observe in himself.

Another, Mohammed, will begin by saying: "Believe me that I am a prophet and that everything which I shall tell you which is written in my Koran is the veritable truth, as revealed to me by God Himself." And he will go on to expound all his doctrine. To this the Chuvash, if he is not altogether a fool (and there are many clever men among them), will say: "Why should I believe you that everything you say is from God? I did not see God transmit His truth to you, and I have not the slightest proofs that you are a prophet, the more so since I have been told that there are Taoists, Buddhists, Brahmins, Mormons, who have just such prophets as you, who say of themselves precisely the same as what you say of yourself. Thus, your saying about yourself that you are a prophet cannot in the least convince me that what you say and what is written in the Koran is the veritable truth. Your having flown to the seventh heaven does not convince me in the least, because I did not see it. But what is written in the Koran is not quite clear, and

often intricate, wordy, arbitrary, and even historically incorrect, as I have heard from people. What can alone convince me is what I cognize myself and am able to verify by reasoning and inner experience."

Thus will the clever Chuvash speak in reply to the words of the second man, and I think he will be quite right.

So this is what I think about Mohammedanism. It will be a good teaching and will coincide with the teaching of all truly religious men, only when it shall reject the blind faith in Mohammed and the Koran and will take from that belief what is in agreement with the reason and the conscience of all men. . . .

*November, 1902.*

. . . I have for the last twenty years established such a relation to God and the demands arising from this relation; and with this relation I have been living until the present, and the longer I live, the more I am confirmed in it; and, approaching death, which I await every day, I experience full peace and equal joy of life and of death.

My belief does not agree with yours; but I do not tell or advise you to give up yours and accept mine. I know that this is as impossible for you as to change your physiological nature,—to find a taste in what is nauseating to you, and vice versa. And so I not only do not advise you to do so, but, on the contrary, advise you to stick to what is your own and to work it out still farther, if it is at all subject to development.

A man can believe only what he is led to believe by the aggregate of all his spiritual forces.

Each of us looks at the world and at the beginning of it through the little window which he himself has cut out or chosen of his free will. And so it may happen that a man who sees dimly and whose window is not clear may himself, of his own will, pass over to another man's win-

dow; but it is quite unreasonable and, to say the least, impolite to call a man, who is satisfied with what he sees, away from his window, to your own.

We all see one and the same God, we all live by His will, and we all, looking at Him from various sides, are able to do His chief law, — to love one another, — in spite of the difference of our view of Him. . . .

*March, 1903.*

. . . You do not understand what is meant by the word "God," and the mention of this word always irritates you. From this you conclude that "it is time for humanity to stop talking of God, whom no one understands."

It is very natural for you to be irritated by the use of a word the meaning of which you do not understand. It is always so. But your conclusion that no one understands what God is, because you do not understand it, is, to say the least, strange. The fact that all mankind has always used this word, being in need of the concept, ought to have led you to the thought that it is not humanity that is to blame, but you, for not understanding that which is understood by the whole of mankind or a great majority of it, and that, therefore, you ought not to advise mankind to stop talking of God, but should yourself try to understand what you do not understand.

Every man, like yourself, must of necessity recognize himself to be a part of something infinite. It is this infinite, of which man recognizes himself to be a part, that is God.

For unenlightened men, to which division belong the vast majority of the so-called learned, who do not understand anything but matter, God will be matter, endless in time and space. Such a concept of God will be very silly, but still they will have a God of their own, no matter how silly. But for enlightened men, who understand that the beginning and essence of life is not in matter, but in



the spirit, God will be that infinite unlimited being which they recognize in themselves within boundaries limited by time and space.

And such a God has been recognized and acknowledged and will be acknowledged by mankind at all times, so long as it does not fall into a beastly state.

1903.

. . . You say that you cannot believe in God the Creator, who created man and all beings, which are subject to diseases, struggle, sufferings.

But the concept of God the Creator is an old superstition, which it is not only superfluous, but even harmful to believe in. We have not the slightest right to imagine a God the Creator.

All we can assert is this, that we exist amidst the world, which presents itself to us as infinite in space and time, and that the basis of our life is something immaterial. We recognize this principle in ourselves in a limited condition, and in consequence of it cannot help having a concept of this immaterial principle, which is not limited and not subject to conditions of time and space. This principle we call God.

This basis of our life cannot be good or evil. It is that which is, τὸ ὄν. What we call evil is merely our ignorance of the consequences of what we see only the causes of.

The true teaching of life, which has been preached by all the sages, Buddha, Confucius, the Brahmins, Lao-tse, Isaiah, and Jesus, consists in the recognition of that immaterial principle which forms our life. Only on the consciousness of this principle may be based and actually is based my belief in my existence,—not the future, but the everlasting existence. The moment I am convinced that life consists in the immaterial principle, as cognized by me, recognized by me as my true ego, I can no longer

believe in the destruction of this extratemporal and extra-spatial ego.

The concept of death is only an error, which is called forth by the false concept that man's real ego is a material integument.

Such are, in a few words, the causes which make me think that death is not an evil, but a change of form, which can be only a progress in life, just as, according to my observation, is all that which during this existence is taking place in me and in all beings.

*1903.*

. . . John iii. 13, in my opinion, means this, that every man is a son of God, and in every man there is a particle of the divinity. The next two verses mean, that this particle of God, which is in every man, must be glorified in each of us, and this glorifying will free us from all evils, as did the glorified serpent in the wilderness.

The idea is, that man must recognize himself to be the son of God, and so he must recognize all other men to be. If man only understood and remembered who he is, he would not abase and defile his dignity with contemptible, low cares and acts. And if he remembered that every man is just such a son of God, he would not permit himself to insult and despise men, — the sons of God and his brothers.

In these verses is the essence of Christ's teaching. . . .

*1903.*

No one, much less I, can be out of sympathy with his plan of a universal strike. But for such a thing to take place, it is necessary for people to be united in one comprehension. Such union of men in one comprehension is given by religion only. And so, to attain the end toward which he is striving, it is necessary to contribute to the dissemination and establishment of the one true

religion. It is as impossible to arrange a universal strike from men of various conceptions of life, as it is impossible to bake bread from rye that has not yet matured and is still in the ear.

*1903.*

I was very glad to receive your letter, dear ———.

I have for a long time been thinking of you and of those subjects of which you write, the most important subjects in the world.

I have not only not changed my view of myself gratifying my own prime needs, but even feel more vividly than ever the importance of it and the sin of my non-fulfilment of it. There have been many causes which have drawn me away from this fulfilment, but I will not count them over, because the chief cause is my weakness, my sin. And so the reception of your letter has been a spiritual joy for me, — an arraignment and a reminder. There is one thing that consoles me, and that is, that, while I lived badly, I did not deceive, did not justify myself, and never said to myself that I could free myself from this labour, for the reason that I write books; I have always recognized what you say, — that just as I have to read a good book, so does he who works for me, and that, if I am able to write a good book, there are hundreds and thousands of men who could write better books, if they were not oppressed and crushed by work. Thus I not only do not disagree with you, but also, being conscious of my sin and suffering from it, more strongly than ever recognize the prime importance of denying the right to use the extorted labour of another man.

As I thought and heard of you, I recognized the whole burden of your situation, and at the same time did not stop envying you. Do not lose your courage, dear friend. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved," refers directly to your situation. I think that no worry can

keep a man from thinking rightly (as I, indeed, see from your letter). What interferes with right reasoning is idleness and luxury, and that I frequently feel in my own case.

However strange and bad it may seem that I, who live in luxury, should permit myself to advise you to continue living in want, I do so boldly, because I cannot for a minute doubt that your life is a good life before your own conscience, before God, and so most necessary and useful to men; while my activity, no matter how useful it may appear to some people, loses, — I wish to hope, not everything, — but certainly the greatest part of its meaning, in consequence of the non-fulfilment of the chief symptom of the sincerity of what I profess.

The other day I had a visit from a clever and religious American, Bryan, and he asked me why I considered simple manual labour indispensable. I told him almost the same as you write, that, in the first place, it is a sign of sincerity in recognizing the equality of all men; in the second, it brings us nearer to the majority of labouring men, from whom we are fenced off by a wall, if we make use of their want; in the third, it gives us the highest good, peace of mind, which does not exist and cannot exist in the case of a sincere man, who makes use of the services of slaves.

So this is my answer to the first point of your letter. Now as to the second, the most difficult point, that about the religious education.

In education in general, both physical and mental, I assume it to be most important not to force anything on the children, but to wait and answer their demands, as they arise; this is most particularly necessary in the chief subject of education, — in religious education.

As it is useless and harmful to feed a child when he does not want to eat, or to force upon him information which does not interest him and he does not need, so it is

even more harmful to impress children with any religious conceptions for which they do not ask, and for the most part to formulate them coarsely and thus to impair that religious relation to life which at this time may unconsciously arise and establish itself in the child.

All that is necessary, it seems to me, is to answer with absolute truthfulness the questions put by the child. It seems very simple to answer truthfully a child's religious questions, but in reality this can be done only by him who has answered truthfully to himself religious questions about God, life, death, good, and evil, — those very questions which children always put very clearly and definitely.

Here there is confirmed what I have always thought of education and what you say in your letter, namely, that the essence of the education of children consists in the education of oneself. However strange this may seem, this self-education is the most powerful weapon which parents have for influencing their children. And that first article, which your future lady neighbours have made their own, namely, "Perfect yourself," is the highest and, however strange this may seem, the most practical activity (in the sense of serving other men, influencing other men) which a man can have. Even so the conditions of your hard life, which you, no doubt, do not properly appreciate, are most advantageous in the matter of education. Your life is *serious*, and your children see and understand it.

But if you want from me a more definite indication as to what to read or put into the children's hands for the purpose of religious education, I should say that it is not right to confine oneself to the religious writings of one belief, — in our case, that of Christianity, — but one should use the Buddhist, Brahmin, Confucianist, Jewish religious literature on a par with the Christian.

This communion with you has given me very, very

much pleasure. I wish it could be one-hundredth part as useful to you as it is to me, and so I wish it were frequently repeated.

*Yásnaya Polyána, December 10, 1903.*

## EXTRACTS

From Unpublished Diaries, Undated Letters, Etc.





# EXTRACTS

From Unpublished Diaries, Undated Letters, Etc.

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OF late I have been shocked, not by physical disfigurements and sores, but by spiritual ones, of which the most obvious disfigurements are the words of one who uses all methods for concealing the truth and advancing the lie in place of the truth.

The sophism of Pobyedonóstsev's retort is this : we have complete religious toleration ; we allow the erection of churches of all religions and the celebration of divine services in them,—of christening, marrying, burying, taking the oath, and so forth, according to the custom of each ; but we prohibit every religion from preaching its doctrine, that is, from converting from Orthodoxy, as they call it. It is assumed that religion consists only in the fulfilment of certain external acts of life,—in divine service, burials, christening, marriage, swearing, and nothing else,—and that every religion is permitted to perform these acts according to its own rites, that is, a Mohammedan is not compelled to have his children baptized, and so forth. This is not religious toleration, but the absence of violence, such as would not cause any men of a strange faith to go to Russia. We have not here as yet anything to do with religion. This is dead form, while religion is

something living. It is something living, if for no other reason, because new men are born all the time, and for them exists the question, "Of what religion?" This question is again decided in a dead way, that is, the children are of their parents' religion. Consequently it is not a religious, but a civil question; now the civil question is not decided on the basis of what ought to guide every civil act, — justice: (1) Children one of whose parents is Orthodox must be Orthodox; (2) one may orally and in writing preach Orthodoxy, but no other religion; (3) it is permissible to convert to Orthodoxy, that is called missionary work, but not to any other religion.

These three points do not exist in other countries, and so there is there religious toleration, but we have it not.

I explained a factory to Stepán. Calico is cheap, because they do not take into consideration the people that are ruined and do not live long. If they did not take into consideration the horses that are ruined at post-stations, driving, too, would be cheap. But let people have the value of horses at least, and you will see what an ell of calico will be worth. The trouble is, people give their lives cheaply, not according to their values. They work for fifteen hours and leave the loom, with troubled eyes, like dazed men, — and so every day.

Three thousand women, getting up at four and leaving work at eight o'clock, and becoming corrupt, and shortening their lives, and distorting their generation, live wretchedly (amidst temptations) in this establishment, in order that the useless calico be cheap and N. N. may have money, whereas he is troubled what to do with the money which he already has. They establish a management, improve it. For what? In order that this ruin of men and ruin in different forms may be successfully and uninterruptedly continued. Wonderful.

Here are seven counts of an indictment of the government: (1) The church — deceit, superstition, waste; (2) the army — debauchery, cruelty, waste; (3) punishments — corruption, cruelty, infection; (4) large ownership of land — hatred, poverty, cities; (5) factory — murder of life; (6) drunkenness; (7) prostitution.

Read Slyeptsóv's *Hard Times*. Yes, there were different demands in the sixties. And because with these demands was connected the murder of the first of March, people have imagined that these demands were irregular. Indeed not. They will exist until they are fulfilled.

The positivists, liberals, revolutionists, and all so-called non-Christian sects believe in the same truth of Christ in which we believe, only not in the whole truth, and under a different name; and so we must not dispute and quarrel with them, but make friends with them.

What a terrible suffering to know that I am suffering and losing my life, not from an avalanche, not from bacteria, but through people, through brothers, who ought to love and who, behold, hate me, if they cause me suffering. That was when they led the Decembrists to execution, that is the unfortunate prisoners in Kára, and so forth. Terrible.

One of the most impudent cases of disobedience to Christ is divine service, common prayer in temples, and calling the clergy fathers, whereas, "And when thou prayest," etc. (Matt. vi. 5-8; xxiii. 8).

The anarchists are right in everything, — in their negation of the existing order and in their assertion that it will not be worse without the power than, with the existing customs, it is with the violence of the power. But

they are mistaken in thinking that anarchy can be established by means of revolution,—that anarchy can be instituted. Anarchy will establish itself; but this will happen because a greater and ever greater number of people will not need the defence of the governmental power, and a greater and ever greater number of people will be ashamed to apply this power.

When N. was a baby, he used to go to bed playing and ask the nurse to continue playing while he was sleeping. Just so the Orthodox people ask their popes to pray for them while they are asleep.

The good doctrine which gets into the church, as in the case of Tikhon Zadónski, is due to this, that in the net of the bad doctrine, which is intended for concealing Christ's teaching from people, there are found good men, Christians in spirit, and they, without rending the net, introduce as much good as they can into it.

Thanks to the censorship, our whole literary activity is an idle occupation. The one necessary thing, which justifies the occupation with it (literature), is put aside by literature. It is as though a carpenter were permitted to plane, provided he made no shavings. In vain do the writers imagine that they are deceiving the governmental censorship. They cannot deceive it, as you could not deceive a man if you wanted softly, without his knowledge, to put a mustard plaster on him. Let it begin to act, and he will tear it off.

The governmental form is now a survival of methods which were necessary before, but now are superfluous; just as goats climb walls and poles, an act which used to be useful to them, but now is of no use to them.

All life is irrational: irrational is a man's useless blind gut, the survival of the horse's fifth toe, and all the superfluities and atavisms of everything living; irrational, above all else, is the struggle for existence,—a useless waste of energy.

Man introduces reason into the world of Nature, destroying irrational struggle and waste. But this activity is outside of self, distant, only reflected. Man sees this irrationality only with his intellect.

But the irrationality of his own life he not only sees with his intellect, but also feels with his heart, as contrary to love, and with his whole being. And in this rationalization of what is irrational in his life does his life consist.

What is very important here is this, that the irrationality in Nature is cognized with the intellect, while the irrationality in human life itself is cognized with the heart (through love) and the intellect.

Man's life consists in rationalizing what is irrational in his life. And so two things are necessary for it:

(1) To see the irrationality of life in all its significance and not to turn one's attention away from it.

(2) To recognize in all purity the rationality of the possible life.

In recognizing the whole irrationality of life and the wretchedness, which always results from it, a man involuntarily turns away from it; and, on the other hand, in clearly recognizing the rationality of a possible life, a man involuntarily strives toward it. Therefore, not to conceal the evil of the irrationality and to point out in all its clearness the good of the rational life will form the problem of all the teachers of humanity.

But here Moses' judgment-seat is always occupied by those who do not go toward the light, because their deeds are evil; and so the people who pose as teachers not only do not try to elucidate the irrationality of life and the

rationality of the ideal, but, on the contrary, conceal the irrationality of life and undermine the confidence in the rationality of the ideal.

This takes place in our life. The whole activity of the men of the world consists in the concealment of the irrationality of life; for this purpose there exist and act:

(1) The police, (2) the army, (3) criminal laws, prisons, (4) philanthropic establishments: homes for children and for old people, (5) educational homes, (6) houses of prostitution, (7) insane asylums, (8) hospitals, especially for syphilitics and consumptives, (9) insurance companies, (10) fire brigades, (11) all compulsory educational institutions, which are established on money collected by force, (12) institutions for minor criminals, agronomic institutions, exhibitions, and many other institutions.

If one-thousandth part of the energy employed in the establishment of all this, which has for its aim the concealment of the evil and which only increases it (it is interesting to follow out how, in a fatal manner, each of these institutions, besides concealing the evil, begets a new evil and irrepressibly, like a snowball, increases that evil which it proposes to destroy,—examine the educational and orphan homes, insane asylums, prisons, army), were used for counteracting all that for which these institutions exist, the evil, which now is obvious to us and which torments us, would be quickly destroyed.

At fairs they have poles to be climbed for prizes. Such a method of entertainment—at times to entice men (to let a man ruin his health), or a walking match in sacks, with us looking on—could have arisen only with a division of men into masters and slaves.

All the forms of our life have arranged themselves as they have, only because there existed this division: acrobats, waiters, privies, the production of mirrors, visiting-

cards, all the factories, — everything could have arisen as it is, only because there was that division into masters and slaves.

And we want brotherly love, having retained the slavish forms of life.

Twelve-year-old ones have been commanded to swear. Do they really imagine they are binding these children? Does not this very demand show obviously their guilt and their consciousness of it?

They want to retain and save the drowning autocracy, and they send Orthodoxy out to its aid. But the autocracy will drown Orthodoxy and then will itself go down so much the more quickly.

A man is considered disgraced, if he has been beaten, if he is accused of stealing, of fighting, of not paying his card debts, and so forth; but how if he has signed a sentence of death, has taken part in an execution, has read somebody else's letters, has put people in prison?

That is certainly worse.

People, in their struggle with lies and superstitions, frequently find consolation in the number of superstitions which they have destroyed. That is not correct. It is impossible to find consolation until everything is destroyed which contradicts reason and demands faith. Superstition is like cancer, — everything must be cleaned out, if an operation is to be undertaken. Leave a small particle, and everything will grow out again.

When you chop a rough block, the first stroke rebounds as from steel, and you think that you are not doing anything, and that it is in vain to strike. And woe, if you lose courage. But strike again, and soon you will

hear dull sounds. That means, that it has moved. A few strokes more, and the block will be chopped.

In such a situation the world is in relation to the Christian truth. How I remember the time when the strokes rebounded and I thought that it was hopeless.

The same is true of people. We must do like the man who began to draw the water out of the ocean. If a man gives his life for any work, no matter what this work may be, it will be done, and much more so God's work.

They say that one swallow does not make a spring; but is a swallow, because one does not make a spring, to wait, though it already feels the spring? If so, then every bud and grass blade ought to wait, and there will be no spring.

There came to me a series of thoughts about the blindness of the men who are struggling against the anarchists by means of destroying the anarchists, and not by means of the correction of that order of life, because of the monstrousness of which the anarchists are fighting.

By a vast and all-round labour of thought and speech the comprehension is diffused among men, is acquired by them in the most varied forms, and, making use of the strangest of means, takes possession of men,—one from fashion, one from boasting, under the guise of the liberalism of science, philosophy, religion,—and becomes proper to men. Men believe that they are brothers, that it is impossible to impress brothers, that it is necessary to help progress and culture, and struggle with superstitions; it becomes public opinion, and suddenly—the terror of the French Revolution, the First of March, the assassination of Carnot,—and all the labour is lost for nothing. The water which is carefully collected drop by drop by means



of a dam goes off by one stroke and uselessly washes away fields and meadows.

How can the anarchist help seeing the harmfulness of violence? How I should like to write to them about it! Everything is so, everything is correct which they discuss and do, in spreading the ideas about the uselessness and harmfulness of the governmental violence. Only one thing must be changed by them, — violence and murder by a non-participation in violence and murder.

I have received an Italian book on teaching Christianity in school.

A beautiful idea about teaching religion being violence, that offence against the children of which Christ spoke. What right have we to teach what is disputed by the vast majority, — the Trinity, the miracles of Buddha, Mohammed, Christ? The only thing we can and must teach is the moral teaching.

A charming expression I heard from N.

We were speaking of the impression produced on peasants by books. It is hard to please them, because *their life is very serious*.

That is a superb sentence. If only a large number of men of our world could understand it!

We were looking at an exquisite sundown. In the towering clouds a rent, and there, like a red, irregular piece of coal, the sun. All that near the forest. A joy.

And I thought: no, this world is no jest, not merely a dale of trials and a transition to a better, an eternal world; this is one of the eternal worlds, which is beautiful and joyous, and which we not only can, but must make more beautiful and more joyous for those who live with us and for all those who will live in it after us.

There are two ways for cognizing the external world :

One is the grossest and most inevitable method of cognizing by means of the five senses. From this method of cognition we should not have formed that idea of the world which we know, but there would be chaos, which gives us various sensations.

The other method consists in this, that, having recognized ourselves through the love of ourselves, we then recognize the other beings through our love of them : we transfer ourselves in thought into another man, animal, plant, even stone. In this manner you cognize externally, form the whole world, as we know it.

This method is what is called the poetic gift ; and this, too, is love. It is, so to speak, the reëstablishment of the violated union between the beings. You go out of yourself and enter into another. And you can enter into everything. All-unite with God, with everything.

In every moral, practical prescription there is a possibility of a contradiction between this prescription and other prescriptions, which result from the same foundation.

Abstemiousness, — well, shall we not eat, and shall we become incapable of serving men ? Not to kill animals, — shall we let them eat us up ? Not to drink wine, — shall we not go to communion, not be cured with wine ? Not to resist evil with evil, — well, shall we allow a man to kill himself and others ?

The discovery of these contradictions shows only that a man who is busy with it wants not to follow the moral rule.

It is all the same story : for the sake of one man, who has to take wine as a cure, we are not to oppose drunkenness. For the sake of one fictitious violator we are to kill, execute, and put in prison.

The death of children from the common point of view : Nature tries to give better ones, and, seeing that the

world is not yet ready for them, takes them back. But she must try, in order to be able to go ahead. So the swallows who return too early freeze to death; but they must none the less return.

But this is a common, bad reflection. A rational reflection is this, that he (the dead child) has done God's work, — the establishment of the kingdom of God through the increase of love, — more than many who have lived half a century, and more.

Love, love him who has hurt you, whom you have condemned, have not loved, — and everything which concealed his soul from you will disappear, and you will, as through fresh water, see at the bottom the divine essence of his love, and you will not have to forgive him, and it will be impossible for you to do so, — you will have to forgive yourself only for not having loved God in him in whom He was, and for not having seen Him on account of your lack of love.

People who have not risen to life are always busy with preparations for life, but there is no life: they are busy with eating, sleeping, studying, resting, the continuation of the race, education. One thing is lacking, — life, the growth of their life.

Yes, our business is like that of a nurse, — to bring up what is entrusted to us, — our life.

And let no one repeat the favourite trite remark that to bring up our life is egoism.

To bring up our life is to serve God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.

When you see the advantage of your neighbour and do not see the advantage for any one from your growth, and

you have to choose, always choose the growth of your life, because the advantage of your neighbour is *always* doubtful, while the good of the growth of your life is *always* indubitable.

Just as aimless and unknown sufferings seem incomprehensible and receive an explanation only outside of conditions of life visible to us, so also the aimless, to our view useless good and the unknown, but indubitable growth of our growth prove to us that our life is not limited to visible conditions. In this, it seems to me, lies the solution of that impassioned, insuperable egoism which forms our life. I can love only myself, but, in order not to suffer from the love of self I must find and secrete in myself what is worthy of love,—God. Is it not for that reason that it says: Thou shalt love the Lord *thy* God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind?

This, people will say, is egoism. And the good of men, they will say, is utilitarianism. Either is incorrect; either is true; and one proves the other. Inside himself a man will find a meaning only in the growth of life. Outside of himself he will find only what establishes the kingdom of God upon earth. One inevitably coincides with the other. Men, according to their strength, are given the guidance of one or the other: both lead to the same goal.

He who has not attained the consciousness of life in growth is guided by what contributes to the good of men. Just as it is precisely the same whether a figure is painted black on white, or whether the white is left on the black,—the contours will be the same.

It is not a metaphor to say that a man who does not bring up his life has no life. Such a man indeed has no life as there is no life in a tree which drops its old bark, but does not produce a new one, as there is none in the animal which is decomposing, and not assimilating food.

The whole carnal life of the organism, with its food, growth, continuation of race, is in relation to the true (growing) life nothing but a destructive process.

You write that, having followed my advice and having, as you write, busied yourself with self-perfection, you felt that you were subjecting yourself to a great danger of living your life egoistically and, therefore, vainly, and that you escaped this danger by having ceased to care for your moral perfection, for the elucidation of your consciousness of the truth, and for the establishment of your life in conformity with this consciousness, and busied yourself with the improvement, enlightenment, and correction of others.

I think that the danger which frightened you was merely an imaginary one, and that, by continuing to elucidate this consciousness and arranging your life in conformity with this consciousness, you did not at all run the risk of leading an idle life, which would be useless to others.

I think the very reverse: there is no possibility of enlightening and correcting others, without having enlightened and corrected ourselves to the utmost limits; indeed, it is impossible to enlighten and correct ourselves individually, for every true enlightenment and correction of ourselves inevitably enlightens and corrects others, and it is this means alone which actually enlightens and corrects others, just as the burning fire cannot light up and warm only the object which is consumed in it, but inevitably lights up and warms objects about itself, but only when it burns itself.

You write: "Will my becoming better do any good to my brother?" This is as though a digger should say, "Will my sharpening the spade advance my work?" Nothing but the sharpening will advance it. But here the comparison is not complete: the enlightenment and

correction of others, as I said before, takes place only through the enlightenment and correction of oneself.

I do not say that what you are doing, staying in military service, and teaching the soldiers the rudiments, etc., is bad. This is unquestionably better than to teach soldiers cruelty and lying, and to beat them. But what is bad for you is this, that, knowing the evil and falseness of military service, with its deceptions, oath, and discipline, you continue to serve. And what is bad is not so much the fact itself that you are serving, as your reflections that, though continuing to serve, you are doing what is right.

I understand that there may be conditions of your relations with your relatives, of your past, of your foibles, which deprive you of your strength to do what you consider to be right, — to leave military service; from weakness we all more or less depart from that ideal, that truth, which we know; but what is important is not to distort truth, to know that I have departed from it, that I am sinful, bad, and without cessation to strive for it and to be ready at any moment, as soon as the obstacles have weakened, to walk upon its path.

A man moves forward, lives, and serves men, only when he knows how much he has departed from truth, and so considers himself to be bad. But if he seeks a justification for his sin and is satisfied with himself, he is dead. But one must not be satisfied with oneself, while doing military service, knowing that its aim is execution and murder, its means servile obedience to every man higher in rank, who to-morrow may command me to kill innocent people, and its conditions — not only idleness, but also a useless waste of the nation's best forces and the deception and corruption of the nation.

How often have I been surprised and pained to see that what is so clear to me (and not simply clear, but

what I live by), namely, what God's will consists in and its fulfilment, seems to others obscure and doubtful. I cannot help but think, as I look at the workmen in the iron foundry on the Túla road, that each of these workmen is given a definite work, which he must do. I see the same in the whole of Nature: every plant, every animal, is predestined for some work, and for this purpose each of them is given corresponding organs,—roots, leaves, feelers, smelling, and so forth. I see, besides, man to whom, in addition to the organs which are given to an animal, there is given reason, which demands of him that he invest all his acts with a meaning. This reason has to be satisfied and must show man what he should do in conformity with this reason. Thus men have always lived, being guided by their reason. To live while being guided by our reason means to live while doing God's will,—just as for an animal to live while being guided by its organs and instincts means to live while doing God's will.

They retort to me that one regards as God's will the flying at each other's throats, another—the eating of Christ's body in the shape of little bits of bread, another—the certainty that he was saved by Christ's blood,—and this difference in the comprehension of God's will seems to trouble men, as though they have to be guided by somebody else's reason, and not by their own. The question is not as to what Dragomírov considers God's will to consist in (besides, it is uncertain whether Dragomírov considers God's will to consist in flying at each other's throats. . . . It is possible to say one thing, and in reality to believe in something else,—words do not prove anything), but as to this, what I, making use of my reason, regard as God's will, that is, what meaning I ascribe to my existence in this world?

There must be a meaning, just as there must be a meaning in those motions which a workman makes in

a foundry. The whole forward motion of human life consists in passing from a lower to a higher comprehension of life,—from flying at the throat to the bits of bread, from the bits of bread to redemption, from redemption to the comprehension of the Christian moral and social teaching.

In this do I understand the meaning of life to consist: in the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth, that is, in substituting a loving and fraternal cohabitation of men for one of violence, cruelty, and hatred. The means for attaining this is personal perfection, that is, the substitution of a loving ministration to others for our egoistical tendencies, as, indeed, it says in the Gospel, that this is the whole law and the prophets: to do to others as we would that others should do to us. In this do I see the meaning of life, than which I see nothing higher, and I do not always live in the name of this meaning, but frequently, and the older I grow the more frequently, I accustom myself to live in the name of it, and, the more I get used to it, the more joyous, free, independent of everything external my life is, and the less terrible is life to me. . . .

Every man arrives at the truth in his own way; but I can say this much: what I write is not words, but I live by it, am happy in it, and shall die with it.

#### OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE

(1) Life is the consciousness of the invariable spiritual principle as manifested within the limits which demarcate this principle from everything else.

(2) The limits of this principle as demarcated from everything else present themselves to man as his moving body and as that of other beings.

(3) Separateness, non-confluence, impermeability of one



being by another can present itself only as matter moving independently of the motion of other beings.

(4) And as corporeality and space, so also motion and time are only conditions of the possibility of representing the separateness of our spiritual being from all the rest, that is, from the unlimited, non-corporeal, non-spatial and non-moving, non-temporal spiritual being.

(5) And so our life presents itself to us as the life of the spatial body moving in time.

(6) It appears to us that our body, forming one part of the corporeal world, unlimited in space, originating from parents, ancestors, who lived before us in infinite time, receives its beginning in the mother's womb, is born, grows, develops, then weakens, dries up, and dies, that is, loses its former corporeality, passing into another, stops moving, and — dies.

(7) In reality our true life is formed only by the consciousness of that spiritual being which is separated from all the rest and is included within the limits of body and motion.

(8) This spiritual being is always equal to itself and is subject to no changes; but to us it seems that it grows and expands in time, that is, moves. But what moves is the limits in which the spiritual beings are. This seems so to us, just as it seems to us that the moon is moving, when the clouds pass over it.

(9) Life is life, only when consciousness is manifested, — when consciousness comes out from its limits. It always exists. Those intervals of the apparent absence of consciousness seem to us so only when we look at the motion of the limits of consciousness in other beings. But when we look within ourselves, we know that consciousness is one and unchangeable, that it does not begin nor end.

(10) Life at first appears to man as materially spatial and moving, temporal. Man recognizes at first as his life

those limits which to him appear as moving matter, which separate him from everything, and assumes that his life is materially spatial and automatically temporal, and in the motion of this matter in time he sees life. In the interruption of the motion of this matter he sees the cessation of his life.

(11) In this conviction man is supported by his observation of other men, who constantly present themselves to him as material in space and moving in time. The observation of the continuity of the motion of matter in other beings causes a man to think that his life, too, is uninterruptedly moving in time, though inwardly he not only does not experience this uninterruptedness of motion, but, on the contrary, experiences a motionless consciousness, always equal to itself, which only for external observation is divided by intervals of sleep, insanity, passions, — but in reality is all one.

(12) Thus people ascribe two different meanings to "life." One meaning is the concept of matter in motion, separate from everything else, which by man is cognized as self, and the second, — a motionless spiritual being, always equal to itself, which man recognizes as self.

(13) These concepts seem to be different, but in reality they are not two concepts, but one: the concept of cognizing oneself as a spiritual being enclosed within limits. The recognition of the spatial and temporal existence of the separate being as life is only the result of insufficient thinking. The recognition of oneself as a being separate from everything else is possible only for a spiritual being. And so life is always the life of the spiritual being. But the spiritual being can be neither spatial nor temporal.

(14) And so the recognition of the material temporal existence as all life is an error of thought, a recognition of the part for the whole, of the consequences for the cause, — is just such an error of thought as the recognition

of the falling stream of water, and not of the river, as the force which moves the mill-wheel.

(15) The distinction between the recognition of the spiritual unchangeable principle, and not its manifestation within those limits in which it is manifested, as life has always been made by all the religious teachers. On this elucidation of the difference between the two concepts of life is based the Gospel teaching about the true life,—the life of the spirit and the false life,—the carnal, the temporal life.

(16) This elucidation is very important, because from the consciousness that the true life is contained only in the spiritual being results all that which is called virtue and which gives the highest good to men. From this consciousness results that which forms the foundation of all the virtues,—results love, that is, the recognition of the life of all the beings of the world through oneself.

(17) From this same cognition, which is nothing but what we call conscience, results continence, fearlessness, self-renunciation, because only with continence, fearlessness, self-renunciation, is possible the fulfilment of the fundamental demand of consciousness,—the recognition of other beings through oneself, that is, love.

(18) A man who has recognized his life is (I believe Pascal said so) like a slave who suddenly discovers that he is a king.

The strength of the governments is in this, that in their hands is the self-feeding circle of power: the false doctrine produces power, and power gives the possibility of disseminating nothing but the false teaching, removing everything which is contrary to it, which arraigns it.

No matter how the guard and the army may be bribed and stultified, they now none the less consist of the same men whom this very guard oppresses and compels to do

evil. Besides, there are not many in this guard. They form a hundredth, at the most a fiftieth, of the whole nation ; but it is also the nation now. And so the power of the governments is now no longer based on force, as was the case formerly, but on deceit.

Men with a calm conscience, as it were, not only at the request of the authorities become policemen, collectors of taxes, and soldiers, but of their own free will become policemen, examining magistrates, prosecutors, soldiers, generals, ministers, kings, and, as it were, with a calm conscience, — at least with external complete self-confidence, — busy themselves with taking away from people their last cow for taxes, which will be used for luxury and murder ; or they put men into prisons, and torment and execute them ; or invent and prepare means of murder ; and amidst poor people own property and lands taken from them, and seem to be proud of this.

The so-called educated people, — those who ought to give an example of that relation to violence which is proper to a rational being, — the learned, liberal, revolutionary men even, discuss, condemn, preach liberty, the dignity of man. But that is so only so long as these educated people are not whistled for to go under the yoke ; and then all discussions and all liberalism and all talks about liberty come to an end ; and he is dressed up in a gaudy livery, is given a gun or a sword in his hands, and a sergeant commands him to run, and jump, and stand still, and whirl around, and put on his cap, and bow, and shout hurrah at the sight of the Tsar, and, above all, be prepared, at the command of this sergeant, to kill his own father, and he, — a liberal, a learned man, — according to the law of evolution, — jumps and bows to whom he is commanded to bow, and shouts hurrah, and is prepared to kill whomever he is commanded to kill.

Thus the same people, the cultured, for whom it would be most natural to strive to bring life into harmony with their consciousness, are mainly busy confusing and contorting this consciousness.

It is obvious to them that it is absolutely unnecessary to discuss the question of resisting evil and of how it is decided by Christianity. All that is mysticism. It is necessary to do all this, that is, to be a submissive slave of slaves.

For an unawakened man the governmental power is certain sacred institutions forming the organs of a live body, an indispensable condition of the life of men. For an awakened man it is badly erring men, who ascribe to themselves a certain fantastic significance, which has no rational justification whatever, and who, by means of violence, execute their wishes. Senates, synods, courts, the administration, — all that is for an awakened man erring and for the most part bribed men, who do violence to other men, just such men as those robbers who seize men on the highways and do violence to them. The antiquity of this violence, the dimensions of the violence, its organization, cannot alter the essence of the thing.

For an awakened man there is not what is called government: and so there are no justifications for all the acts of violence committed in the name of the government; and so there can be for him no participation in them.

Governmental violence will not be destroyed by external means, but only by the consciousness of men awakened to the truth.

Suffering from sickness and interference with occupations, which we experience from sickness, are not due to sickness, but to our relation to death.

If we recognize that death is a necessary end of our carnal existence, and that in this imminent end, as also

in the continuation of this life, there is nothing, either bad or good, the sufferings will cease being painful and will not interfere with life.

If a man did not in the least doubt the indestructibility of his life after death, all diseases would present themselves to him only as conditions of a transition from one form of life to another, — a form rather desirable than otherwise, — and then he would bear the pain caused by disease in the same way as we bear pain caused by tense labour, which we know will end in something good. And there would be no suffering and no consciousness of an interruption of activity, for during the pain we should have a definite activity — that of preparing ourselves for the new state.

We are all able, though only in part, to experience that this is so.

But how can it help but be terrible for people to suffer, when their whole life consists in attempts at realizing their wishes in this world in the future, in the constant desire that the future may come as quickly as possible, and when they none the less know that at the end of this future stands that of which they are so afraid that they dare not even think of it, — death? How can they help but suffer, since they are constantly in this inner contradiction, when a disease comes which, like all diseases, brings death with it?

From this arises the painfulness of the sufferings. From this also comes what we call the cessation of all life from disease.

Oh, if we did not for a moment forget death, into which we may slip any minute! If we only remembered that we are not standing on a level plane (if we think that we are, then it only appears that he who has gone has disappeared suddenly, and we are afraid that we, too, shall disappear suddenly), but are sliding, constantly colliding,

overtaking, and being overtaken, down there, behind the curtain, which conceals from us those who go away from us and will conceal us from the rest!

If we always remember this, it is so easy and so joyous to live and slide together down that incline, in the power of that God, in whose power we have been and will be later and for ever.

Frequently I think well, but I think without death,—and this is a frivolous and empty thought. Frequently I live well, but I live without the expectation of death,—and this is a frivolous and empty life.

Life is the talent given me for increase. It is possible to think and live with death only when we remember that our one business is not to write something, to aid some one, to do something outside of ourselves, but only to increase our life, in order to give it back to the Master, when He takes it, better, larger, than when it was given to me.

This is strange only when the increase of life may be imagined outside of love of men and, therefore, outside of serving them. But increase and serving are one and the same, except that they are viewed from different sides.

I know that you have that which supports you in your grievous moments of life,—faith in eternal life, a tiny part of which is formed by this life, which is of importance only, in order that we may not be false to what we recognize to be God's will. I know this, but I know also that it is impossible for us always to maintain ourselves in the spirit in which we see and remember only God and His law; I know that after a spiritual exaltation there are falls. In these minutes of spiritual fall I would like to be with you, to suffer together with you and rise with you and help one another.

In grievous moments I am always mindful of Christ's

words, "Have I not come for this hour?" And these words always support me, if I happen to think of them in time. Grievous minutes must be dear to us, because, to live through them properly, we have lived and gathered strength during all our preceding life. "He that suffereth unto the end shall be saved."

What has always helped me very much is the thought that what is hard for me is the very step which I have reached and on which I have put my foot, in order to rise higher.

Thank God, I live well, that is, better than before: there is more concord and love of men and more obedience to God's will. Lack of love is due to nothing but disobedience.

I carefully read both your letters twice and understand everything separately, but fail to comprehend the general spirit of the whole, — I do not understand the motive of your dissatisfaction. You say: "Union, but union is possible only in the truth." To find union with men, it is not necessary to go to meet men, but for all to go toward God or truth. Only there is union, and not with those with whom I want or propose to have a union, but with those who arrived there whither I myself went.

I represent to myself the world as an enormous temple, in which the light falls from above, in the very middle. For us to meet, we must all go toward this light, and, arriving from all sides, we shall meet there with entirely unexpected people. And this is joy.

It is this union that we ought to search for, and we ought to search for it with these means, and it is impossible for us to help one another. What you say about the necessity of the form of life is quite true, but it is not enough to say "necessity," — it is necessary to say "the



inevitableness" of the form. If one lives separately, or people live together materially, or only spiritually (as I understand that I am living with all and you with the rest), there certainly is a form of this life. And it is very inconvenient and even harmful to look at this form, to define it. Let others look at the form and define the form in which I live, but I have to live.

Again you do not say well that, when a beggar comes, there is no time to inquire whether love is increased, and so forth. You know that I did not say so for that purpose, but in order, if there is any doubt in one's activity, to apply this measure to such an activity. And so I will say, taking your own example, that if a pail is filled with annoyance, or he whose pail is being filled does not expect a pail, but a small measure, and receives it with annoyance, such an activity is not correct.

I cannot understand why you are dissatisfied with yourself and with others, and what you want. It seems to me that there ought to be dissatisfaction with oneself, — not with others, and I frequently console myself with the fact that I am constantly dissatisfied with myself, — since I am not yet entirely lost; but I know what I am dissatisfied with, — with my definite abominations, from which I cannot be liberated by anybody's aid, and the work over which forms my life. I do not trouble myself, however, about the circle in which I live, about my external conditions of life, because I know by experience that this or that circle, these or those conditions, result from my greater or lesser nearness to Christ, to truth. I live as I do, not because a ray of light reached me under grievous circumstances (as I used to think), but because I am bad. In proportion as I shall be and am better, the circle, too, and the external conditions are better. If I were a saint, and the circle and the external conditions were ideal, I should be living as I present to myself the life of a disciple of Christ, — a beggar, a vagabond, a

servant of all men, — and I still do not despair to attain this, because it is all in my power. It is also impossible to become better, to stand nearer to truth in consequence of external conditions, just as it is impossible to sit astride a stick and raise oneself by grasping the stick. The external conditions, the form of life, union, — all that is the result of an inner perfection, — an approach to Christ: “Seek ye the kingdom of God which is within you, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Maybe I am mistaken and reply to what you did not ask. If so, forgive me. I wrote loving, thinking of you, and wishing, if possible, to be useful to you.

. . . The difficulty, which you met with in the answer of the young man who would like to follow the dictates of his conscience and at the same time feels the impossibility of forsaking and grieving his mother, is one I know, and I have several times had occasion to reply to it.

Christ’s teaching is not a doctrine which demands certain acts, — it does not demand anything of those who want to follow it. It consists, as the word “Gospel” (the announcement of the good) indicates, in the knowledge of man’s true good. The moment a man has come to understand and is permeated with the consciousness that his true good, the good of his eternal, that is, his true, life, the one which is not limited to this world, consists in the doing of God’s will, and that to commit murder and prepare oneself for murder — as do those who become military men — is contrary to this will, no consideration can compel this man to act contrary to his true good. If there is an internal struggle, and if, as in the case of which you speak, family considerations are uppermost, this serves as a proof that Christ’s true teaching is not understood by him who is unable to follow it. This only proves that he would like to appear a Christian, but is

not such in reality. And so I find it useless and frequently even harmful to preach certain acts or abstinence from acts, like the refusal to do military service, and so forth. All the acts should arise, not from a desire to follow certain rules, but from a complete impossibility of acting differently. And so, when I find myself in a situation such as the one is in which you found yourself before this young man, I always advise people to do everything that is demanded of them, — to enter military service, serve, swear, and so forth, — if only this is morally possible for them to do; not to abstain from anything, unless this becomes morally as impossible as it is impossible for a man to lift up a mountain or rise in the air. I always tell them: “If you want to refuse to do military service and to bear all the consequences of this refusal, try to attain that degree of certainty and lucidity when it shall be as impossible for you to take an oath and go through the manual of arms as it is now for you to strangle a child or do something like it. But if that is possible for you to do, do it, because it is better that there should be one more soldier than one more hypocrite or apostate from the teaching, as happens with those who undertake things that are above their strength. This is why I am convinced that the Christian truth cannot be disseminated by the preaching of certain external acts, as is done in the pseudo-Christian religions, but only through the destruction and dethronement of the offences, and especially through the conviction that man’s one true good is contained in the doing of God’s will, in which lies man’s law and destiny.

At the moment of my writing two young men of my friends are locked up — one in prison, the other in an insane asylum — for having refused to do military service. One of these is a young Moscow artist. I am trying to influence him as little as possible in his refusal, because I know that, to bear all the trials which await

him, he needs strength, which cannot come from without; he needs the firm conviction that his life has no other meaning than that which consists in doing the will of Him who sent him here, but this conviction is formed within. I can help its formation, but I cannot give it: more than anything else I am afraid of making him believe that he has this conviction, when he does not have it. . . .

. . . The idea of a military strike has already been announced at the last socialistic congress but one, by one of your countrymen, whom I respect very much, though I have forgotten his name (Domela, I think). When you write again, let me have the pleasure of hearing something about this socialist, who is so remarkable for his activity. . . .

. . . The most remarkable thing about this movement is this, that the masses are on the side of the students, or, rather, on the side of the expression of dissatisfaction.

Working people and students come to me and write to me, and I tell them all: For the good of men we need first their union among themselves, and so, the more communion, the more mutual sympathy there is, the better. But we must unite not in the name of hostility, but in the name of mutual love; if this union seems dangerous and harmful to some people, so much the worse for them. We invite them to this communion. . . .

. . . There is one thing I may say in my name, and that is, that making Russian people — policemen, Cossacks, and soldiers — so bestial that they commit acts which are contrary even to their nature and their religious beliefs, is very important, and we cannot look too seriously upon it: we must try to investigate, promulgate, and understand its causes.

## THE DEMANDS OF LOVE

(From a diary)

IMAGINE some people, for completeness' sake, a man and a woman — husband and wife, brother and sister, father and daughter, mother and son — of the wealthy classes, who have come to a vivid realization of the sinfulness of their life of luxury and idleness amidst the poverty of the masses that are crushed by labour, and who have left the city, have given away their surplus, or in one way or another have rid themselves of it, have left for themselves, say, 150 paper roubles per year, or have even not left anything for themselves, but earn the amount by some labour, — let us say, by painting on china, translating good books, — and live in the country, in the centre of a Russian village, having rented or bought a hut, working their garden with their own hands, attending to bees, and at the same time giving aid to the villagers, — medical, as much as they know of it, and educational, by teaching the children, writing letters and petitions, and so forth.

It would seem there cannot be anything better than such a life. But this life will be or become a hell, if these people are not going to dissemble and lie, if they are going to be sincere. If these people have renounced all advantages and joys, all the adornments of life, which city and money gave them, they did so only because they recognize men to be their equal brothers in the sight of God, — not equal in abilities and worth, if you so wish,

but equal in their rights to life and to everything which it can give them.

If there can be any doubt as to the equality of men, when we view them as adults with a separate past for every one, there can be no such doubt when we see them as children. Why will this child have all the care, all the aid of knowledge for his physical and mental development, while that charming boy with the same or even better promise will become a rachitic, degenerate half-cripple, for the want of milk, and will remain an ignorant, savage man, fettered by superstitions,—nothing but a coarse labouring force?

If these people have left the city and have settled in the country, as they have, they have done so only because they believe in the brotherhood of men, not only in words, but also in fact, and wish, if not to realize it in their lives, at least to work for its realization. And this attempt at its realization must, if it is sincere, lead them to a terrible, hopeless situation.

With their habits of order, comfort, and chiefly cleanliness, acquired in childhood, they came to the country, where they hired or bought a hut, cleaned it of vermin, perhaps themselves papered it, brought a remnant of their furniture, not luxurious, but necessary furniture,—an iron bed, a safe, a small writing-desk. And there they are living. At first the peasants feel shy in their presence: they expect that they, like all rich people, will by means of violence defend their property, and so do not approach them with requests and demands. But slowly the mood of the new inhabitants is becoming clear: they themselves offer their services gratis, and the boldest and most forward of the peasants find out through experience that these new people do not refuse anything and that it is possible to get things out of them.

And they begin to put forth all kinds of demands, and these demands keep growing and growing.

There begins something like the pouring out and leveling of a heaping mass of grain, until no heap is left.

There begin not only exactions, but even natural demands that that which is superfluous, as compared with what others have, be distributed among them; and not only are there demands, but those who have settled in the country and who are all the time in close relations with the masses feel an inevitable necessity of giving their surplus to those who are in dire need. Not only do they feel the necessity of giving up their surplus, until they have left what all have, that is, what the average has,—but there does not exist a definition of this average, of what all ought to have; and they cannot stop, because there is always a crying want all about them, and they have a surplus, as compared with this want: it would seem that they ought to retain for themselves a glass of milk, but *Matréna* has two children, one, at the breast, who does not find any milk in the mother's breast, and the other, of two years of age, who is beginning to grow feeble. It would seem right to retain a pillow and a coverlet, in order to fall asleep under habitual conditions after a day of labour, but a sick man is lying on a lousy caftan and is freezing at night, covering himself with a gunny-bag. It would seem right to retain the tea, the food, but it becomes necessary to give all that to some feeble and old pilgrims. It would seem right at least to retain cleanliness in the house, but there come some beggar boys, and they are allowed to stay overnight, and fill the room with lice, which the people had just rid themselves of, when they returned from a patient.

It is impossible to stop, and where should one stop?

Only those who do not know at all that feeling of the consciousness of the brotherhood of men, in consequence of which these people went to the country, or who are so accustomed to lying that they do not notice the difference between the lie and the truth, will say that there is

a limit, at which it is possible and necessary to stop. The point is, that there is no such limit, that the feeling in the name of which this thing is being done is such that it has no limit,—that if it has a limit, it only means that this feeling never existed, but there was only hypocrisy.

I continue to present these people to myself. They have worked a whole day; they return home; they have no longer a bed or a pillow; they sleep on straw, which they have fetched for themselves; and now, having eaten a piece of bread, they lie down to sleep. It is autumn,—it is raining and snowing. There is a knock at the door. Can they refuse to open it? A man who is drenched and in a fever enters. What is to be done? Shall he be allowed to lie down on the dry straw? There is no more dry straw. And they have either to drive the sick man away, or let him lie down on the floor, wet as he is, or give him their straw, and themselves lie down with him, since it is necessary to sleep somewhere. More than that: there comes a man whom you know as a drunkard and a dissipated man, whom you have helped several times, and who every time spent in drinks everything you gave him; he comes now, with trembling jaws, asking you to give him three roubles, which he stole and spent in drinks, and which, if he does not return them, will cause him to be put in prison. You say that you have only four roubles and that you need that sum for a payment which you have to make to-morrow. Then the visitor says: “Yes, it is all nothing but talk; when it comes to acts, you are like the rest: let him whom we call our brother perish, so long as we remain whole.”

How is one to act in this case? What is to be done? To put the feverish man on the damp ground, and themselves to lie down on dry straw, is only worse,—you will **not** fall asleep. To put him on your bed and lie down with him,—you will only be infected with lice and



with typhus. To give the beggar the last three roubles, means to be left without bread for to-morrow. Not to give it to him, means, as he says, to renounce everything in the name of which one lives. If it is possible to stop here, why not have stopped earlier? What sense was there in helping people at all? Why give away one's property, why leave the city? Where is the limit? If there is a limit to the work you are doing, the whole work has no sense, or has only one terrible sense of hypocrisy.

What is to be done here? Not to stop, means to ruin one's life, be covered with lice, grow sick, and die, and, apparently, without any use. To stop, means to renounce everything in the name of which all this was done, in the name of which all the good was done. And it is impossible to renounce it, because it was not invented by me or by Christ that we are brothers and must serve one another; that is all so, and it is impossible to tear this consciousness out of the heart of man, when it has entered it. What is to be done? Is there no other way out?

And so let us suppose that these people, without getting frightened at the situation in which they are placed by the necessity of sacrifice, which leads to inevitable death, have decided that their condition is due to the fact that the means with which they have come to the aid of the people are too small, and that this would not have happened, that they would do more good, if they had more money. And let us suppose that these men have found the sources of aid, have collected enormous sums of money, and have begun to bear aid. Not a week would pass but what the same thing would have to be repeated. Very soon all the means, no matter how great they were, would be poured into those hollows which are formed by poverty, and the situation would remain the same.

But maybe there is still a third way out. There are some people who say that it exists and consists in contributing to the enlightenment of people, when this inequality will be destroyed.

But this way out is too obviously hypocritical: it is impossible to enlighten a populace that is any minute on the brink of death from starvation. The insincerity of the men who preach this is, above all else, to be seen from the mere fact that a man who is striving to establish this equality, even by means of science, cannot help but maintain this inequality with his whole life.

But there is a fourth way out: it consists in contributing to the destruction of all those causes which produce the inequality,—in contributing to the destruction of the violence which produces it.

And this way out cannot help but occur to those sincere people who in their life will try to realize their consciousness of the brotherhood of men.

“If we cannot live here, among these people, in the country,” those people whom I have imagined will be obliged to say to themselves, “if we are placed in such a terrible situation that we must inevitably grow sick, be covered with lice, and die a slow death, or renounce the one moral foundation of our life, this is due to the fact that wealth is collected in the hands of some, while others are in distress; this inequality is due to violence; and since the basis of everything is violence, we must fight against it.” Only the destruction of this violence and of the slavery resulting from it can make possible such a ministration to men that the sacrifice of one’s life shall not be inevitable.

But how is this violence to be destroyed? Where is it? It is in the soldier, in the policeman, in the elder, in the lock, which locks my door. How can I struggle against them? Where, in what?

Here are people who all live by violence, and who

struggle against violence and with violence struggle against violence.

But for a sincere man this is impossible. To oppose violence to violence means to put new violence in the place of the old. To help by means of enlightenment, which is based on violence, means the same. To collect money, which is acquired through violence, and to use it in aiding men who are deprived of their share through violence, means with violence to cure wounds which are produced by violence.

Even in the case which I represent to myself, — not to let the sick man in, not to let him lie down on my bed, and not to give the three roubles, because I can by force retain the money, there is also violence. And so the struggle with violence does not for a man of our society, who wishes to live fraternally, exclude the necessity of giving up his life, of becoming covered with lice, and of dying, — but withal, fighting violence, not with the sermon of violence, but with the arraignment of violence, and, above all, with the example, not of violence, but of sacrifice. No matter how terrible and difficult may be the position of a man who is living a Christian life amidst a life of violence, he has no other way out but struggle and sacrifice, — and sacrifice until the end.

We must see the abyss which separates the vermin-ridden, starved millions of people from the overfed, lace-wearing other people; and to fill it up we need sacrifices, and not that hypocrisy with which we now try to conceal from ourselves the depth of this abyss. A man may not find sufficient strength in himself to throw himself into this abyss, but not one man who seeks life can avoid it. We may not want to go into it; but let us know and say so, and not deceive ourselves, not dissemble.

Yes and no, this abyss is not at all so terrible. And if it is, the terrors awaiting us on the path of worldly life are more terrible.

There are fewer chances of dying from lice, the plague, or want, in helping people and giving everything we have to them, than of dying in manœuvres, in war.

These lice and the black bread and want seem so terrible to us. The bottom of want is not deep, and frequently — like the boy who in terror passed a night hanging down from a projection in the well, into which he had fallen — we are afraid of the imaginary depth and the water: one foot below the boy there was a dry bottom.

But we must not depend on this bottom, — we must march on toward death. Only that love is love for which there is no end to sacrifices, — until death itself.

## TOLSTÓYISM

(From his diary of the year 1897)

I WAS glad to have had an opportunity of expressing myself and making it clear to myself that it is a great and gross mistake to talk of Tolstóyism, to seek my guidance, to ask for my solution of questions.

There never has been such a thing as my teaching; there is the one eternal, universal teaching of the truth, which for me, for us, is expressed in the Gospels with particular clearness. This teaching calls man to the recognition of his filial relation to God, and so of his freedom, or his slavery (call it as you will), — the freedom from the influence of the world, and the slavery to God, — to His will; and as soon as a man has come to understand this teaching, he freely enters into an immediate communion with God, and he has nothing to ask any one about.

It is like rowing on a river which spreads beyond the current. So long as a man is not in the middle current, but in the calm, he has to row himself, and here he may be guided by the direction of other men's rowing. There I, too, myself rowing toward the current, was able to guide people; but the moment we have entered the current, there is no guide, and there can be none. We are all borne down by the power of the current, all of us in one direction, and those who were behind us may be ahead of us.

If a man asks whither he should row, this proves that he has not yet entered the current, and that he whom he

asks is a poor guide, if he was not able to bring him to the current, that is, to that condition where it is impossible to ask, because there is no sense in asking. How can I ask whither I should row, when the current bears me with irresistible force in the direction which gives me joy?

People who submit to one guide, and believe and obey him, are certainly wandering in the dark, together with their guide.

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# THE SLAVERY OF OUR TIME

1900



# THE SLAVERY OF OUR TIME

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## INTRODUCTION

ALMOST fifteen years ago the census taken in Moscow evoked in me a series of thoughts and sentiments which I, as well as I could, expressed in a book, entitled *What Shall We Do Then?* Toward the end of last year, the year 1899, I had occasion once more to reflect upon the same questions, and the answers at which I arrived were the same as in the book, *What Shall We Do Then?* but as it seems to me that in these fifteen years I have been able more calmly and at greater length, in connection with the now existing and popular doctrines, once more to reflect upon the subject which was discussed in the book, *What Shall We Do Then?* I now offer my readers new proofs, which bring us to the same answers as before. I think that these arguments may be useful to people who are sincerely striving after an elucidation of their position in society and to a clear determination of the moral obligations which arise from this position, and so I print them.

The fundamental idea, both of that book and of the present article, is the rejection of violence. This rejection I learned and came to understand from the Gospel, where it is most clearly expressed in the words, "An eye for an eye . . . that is, you have been taught to use vio-

lence against violence, but I teach you to offer the other cheek, when you are smitten, that is, to endure violence, but not to offer it." I know that these great words, thanks to the frivolously perverse and mutually concordant interpretations of the liberals and of the church, will for the majority of so-called cultured people be the cause why they will not read the article, or why they will read it with a bias; none the less I place these words at the head of the present article.

I cannot keep people who call themselves enlightened from regarding the Gospel teaching as an obsolete guidance of life which was long ago outlived by humanity. It is my business to point out the source from which I drew the knowledge of the truth which is still far from being cognized by all men, and which alone can free people from their calamities. And this I am doing.

*June 28, 1900.*

## 1

A WEIGHER serving on the Moscow-Kazán Railway, with whom I am acquainted, told me, in a conversation which I had with him, that peasants who load freight on his scales work for thirty-six hours in succession.

In spite of my full confidence in the truthfulness of my interlocutor, I could not believe him. I thought that he was either mistaken, or was exaggerating, or that I had not understood him correctly.

But the weigher went on to give me such details about the conditions under which this work takes place, that no room for doubt was left. According to his story there are 250 such freight-hands on the Moscow-Kazán Road. They are divided into parties of five, and work by contract, receiving from one rouble to one rouble and fifteen kopeks per thousand puds of freight loaded or unloaded.

They come in the morning, work a day and a night unloading, and immediately after the end of the night, in the morning, start to load up, and thus work for another day. Thus they sleep but one night in forty-eight hours.

Their work consists in throwing out and taking away bales weighing seven, eight, and even ten puds. Two men hoist the bales on the shoulders of the other three, and these carry the load. By such labour they earn one rouble per day, out of which they have to feed themselves. They work continuously, without holidays.

The weigher's story was so circumstantial that it was impossible to doubt it, but I none the less decided to verify it, and so went to the freight station.

Upon finding my acquaintance at the freight station,

I told him that I had come to look at what he had told me.

"Nobody to whom I tell it is willing to believe it," I said.

"Nikíta," the weigher, without answering me, turned to some one in the shed, "come here!"

Out of the door stepped a tall, slim labourer, in a torn coat.

"When did you begin working?"

"When? Yesterday morning."

"Where were you during the night?"

"Where else, but at the unloading?"

"Did you work at night?" I asked this time.

"Of course, I worked."

"And when did you come here to-day?"

"In the morning, — what a question!"

"And when will you get through with your work?"

"When they discharge me, — then shall I get through."

Four more labourers, out of a party of five, came up to us.

They were all without fur coats, in torn undercoats, although it was twenty degrees Réaumur below zero.

I asked them about the details of their work, evidently puzzling them with my interest in what to them was so simple and natural a thing as thirty-six hours' work.

They were all villagers, for the most part my countrymen, from the Government of Túla; there were also some from Orél and others from Vorónezh. They live in Moscow in hired rooms, some with their families, but for the most part alone. Those who live alone send their earnings home.

They board singly with their landlords. Their board comes to ten roubles per month, and they eat meat at all times without keeping the fasts.

They are at work, not thirty-six hours in succession, but always more, because they lose more than half an

hour in going from their quarters and coming back, and, besides, are frequently kept at work for more than the set time. With such thirty-seven hours' work in succession they earn twenty-five roubles per month, out of which they have to pay for their board.

In reply to my question as to why they do such convict labour, they answered:

"What else shall we do?"

"But why work thirty-six hours in succession? Can't you arrange it in such a way as to work by relays?"

"That's what we are told to do."

"But why do you consent?"

"We consent, because we have to make a living. If you do not want to, — go! If you are an hour late, you get your discharge, — and march! There are ten other men who are ready to take your place."

The labourers were all young people; only one of them was older, somewhere above forty. They all had emaciated, careworn faces and weary eyes, as though they had been drinking. The slim labourer with whom I had first begun to speak struck me more especially by this strange weariness of his look. I asked him whether he had not had something to drink that day.

"I do not drink," he answered, as without thinking always answer people who really do not drink.

"And I do not smoke, either," he added.

"And do the others drink?" I asked.

"Yes, they do. They bring it here."

"It is no light work. It will give you strength, all the same," said a middle-aged labourer.

This labourer had had some liquor on that day, but he did not show it at all.

After some further talk with the labourers, I went to take a look at the unloading.

After passing between long rows of all kinds of merchandise, I came to some labourers who were slowly

moving a loaded car. The shifting of the cars and the clearing of the platforms from snow, as I later learned, the labourers are obliged to do without any remuneration. It even says so in the contract. These labourers were as ragged and as emaciated as those with whom I talked. When they had rolled the car up to the place wanted, and stopped, I went up to them and asked them when they had begun working, and when they had had their dinner.

I was told that they had begun to work at seven o'clock and had just had their dinner.

"We had to have dinner after work was through,— they did not let us go."

"And when will they let you go?"

"Any time. It may be as late as ten o'clock," replied the labourers, as though priding themselves on their endurance in work.

Seeing my interest in their condition, the labourers surrounded me, and, speaking several at a time, apparently taking me for a chief, informed me, what evidently formed their chief grievance, that the quarters where at times they could warm themselves or fall asleep for an hour, between the day and the night work, were narrow. They all expressed great dissatisfaction with the crowded quarters.

"Some hundred men gather there, and there is no place to lie down in; it is crowded even under the benches," several voices said, with dissatisfaction. "Look at it yourself, — it is not far from here."

The quarters were crowded indeed. In the room, which was about twenty feet square, about forty men could find places on the benches.

Several labourers followed me into the room, and all of them, interrupting one another, angrily complained of the crowded condition of the quarters. "There is even no place to lie down under the benches," they said.

At first it seemed strange to me that all these men, who in a cold of twenty below zero, without fur coats, for



the period of thirty-seven hours carried ten-pud weights on their backs, who were not allowed to go to dinner and supper when it was time to, but when it so pleased the authorities, and who, in general, were in an infinitely worse state than the dray-horses, should complain of nothing but the crowded condition of their warming-place. At first this seemed strange to me, but, when I reflected on their condition, I understood what an agonizing experience it must be for these men, who do not get enough sleep and are frozen, when, instead of resting and warming themselves, they crawl over a dirty floor under the benches, and there feel only weaker and more tired in the close, infected atmosphere.

No doubt, they only in this agonizing hour of a vain attempt at sleeping feel painfully the whole terror of their thirty-seven hours' work, which ruins their lives, and so are more especially provoked by this seemingly unimportant circumstance, — the crowded condition of the quarters. After watching several of their parties at work and speaking with some of the labourers, and hearing one and the same thing from all of them, I went home, fully convinced that what my acquaintance told me was the truth.

It was true that for money, which gives nothing but their sustenance to men who consider themselves free, these men find it necessary to hire themselves out for work to which in the times of serf law not one serf-owner, even the most cruel, would have sent out his slaves. Why, not even a hack-owner would send out his horse, because his horse cost money, and it is not profitable to shorten the life of a costly animal by means of thirty-seven hours of the hardest kind of work.

## 2

It is not merely cruel, but even unprofitable, to make men work for thirty-seven hours in succession, without

any sleep. And yet such unprofitable exploitation of human lives is taking place all about us without interruption.

Opposite the house in which I live there is a factory of silk articles, which has all the latest technical improvements. In it live and work about three thousand women and seven hundred men. Just as I am sitting here, in my house, I hear the continuous rumble of machinery, and I know, for I have been there, what this rumble means. Three thousand women stand for twelve hours at the looms, amidst a deafening noise, winding, unwinding, spinning silk threads for the production of silk stuffs. All the women, with the exception of those who have just come from the villages, have an unhealthy appearance. The majority of them lead a very incontinent and immoral life; nearly all the married and unmarried women immediately after childbirth send their children either into the country or into a foundling house, where eighty per cent. of these children perish; and the mothers, not to lose their places, go back to work one or two days after childbirth.

Thus, in the period of twenty years that I have known this, tens of thousands of young, healthy women have been ruining their lives and those of their children, in order to produce velvet and silk stuffs.

Yesterday I met a young beggar of a powerful build, whose spine was curved and who was walking with crutches. He had been working with a wheelbarrow, when he lost his balance and injured himself internally. He spent what he had with doctors and curing-women, and has been these eight years without a home, has been begging, and murmurs against God for not sending death to him.

How many such ruined lives there are, which we either know nothing of, or, if we know, do not notice, thinking that it is right as it is!

I know in a Tula iron foundry labourers at the furnaces, who, to have every second Sunday free, work twenty-four hours in succession. I have seen these labourers. They all drink liquor, to brace themselves, and, just like those freight-handlers at the railroad, obviously are rapidly losing not only the interest, but even the capital of their lives. And what about the wasting of the lives of those men who are employed in admittedly injurious labour,—the compositors, who poison themselves with lead dust, the workmen in mirror factories, in card, match, sugar, tobacco, glass factories, the miners, the privy-cleaners?

The statistical data of England say that the average length of the lives of the men of the higher classes is fifty-five years, but that the duration of the lives of workmen in unhealthy professions is twenty-nine years.

It would seem that, knowing this (it is impossible not to know this), we, the men who use the labour that costs so many human lives, if we are no beasts, could not for a moment remain at peace. And yet, we, well-to-do, liberal, humane people, who are very sensitive, not only to the sufferings of men, but of animals as well, continue to employ this labour, try to become richer and richer, that is, to use more and more of such labour, and remain completely at peace.

Having, for example, learned of the thirty-seven-hour work of the freight-handlers and of their bad quarters, we will immediately send there a well-paid inspector, will not allow any work above twelve hours, leaving the third of the labourers who are deprived of their income to live as they please, will even compel the railroad to build commodious and ample quarters for the labourers, and then we shall with absolutely calm consciences receive and transport goods by this road and receive a salary, dividends, rentals from houses, from land, and so forth. And, upon learning that women and girls, who live in

the silk factory, far away from their families and amidst temptations, are ruining themselves and their children, that the greater part of the laundresses who iron our starched shirts, and of the compositors who set up entertaining books for us, grow consumptive, we shall only shrug our shoulders and say that we are very sorry that this is so, but that we are unable to do anything to prevent this, and we shall continue with an easy conscience to purchase silk stuffs, to wear starched shirts, and to read the newspapers in the morning. We are very much concerned about the resting spells of commercial clerks, still more about the overexertion of our children in the gymnasia, strictly forbid the draymen to overload their horses, and even so arrange the slaughtering of the animals in the slaughter-houses that the animals shall suffer as little as possible. What remarkable eclipse shrouds us the moment we touch on those millions of labourers who on all sides slowly and often painfully kill themselves with that work which we use for our conveniences and pleasures!

## 3

This remarkable eclipse that the people of our circle suffer from may be explained only by this, that when people act badly, they always invent such a world-conception for themselves that their evil deeds may not appear as evil, but as the consequences of invariable laws which are beyond their power. In antiquity such a world-conception consisted in this, that there exists God's inexplicable and invariable will, which for some determined a low position and work, and for others a high position and the enjoyment of the goods of life.

Upon the theme of this world-conception a vast number of books were written and an endless number of sermons delivered. This theme was worked out from the most various sides. It was proved that God created different

kinds of men, slaves and masters, and that both ought to be satisfied with their situation; then it was proved that the slaves would be better off in the world to come; then it was made clear that, although the slaves were slaves and must remain such, their situation would not be bad, if their masters were merciful to them; then, after the liberation of the slaves, the last explanation was, that wealth was entrusted to some people that they might use part of it for good acts, and that in this case the wealth of some and the poverty of the others did not represent anything bad.

These explanations for a long time satisfied both the poor and the rich, especially the latter. But the time came when these explanations became insufficient, especially for those who began to understand their condition of poverty. Then new explanations were needed, and just at that time these new explanations made their appearance. These appeared in the form of science,—political economy, which asserts that it has found the laws according to which labour and the use of its productions are distributed among men. These laws, according to the doctrine of this science, consist in this, that the distribution of labour and the use of it depends on supply and demand, on capital, interest, wages, prices, profit, etc., in general on invariable laws which condition men's economical activity.

On this theme there were in a short time written not fewer books and pamphlets and delivered not fewer lectures than there had been written treatises and delivered theological sermons on the previous theme, and even now they incessantly write mountains of books and pamphlets and deliver lectures on the same subject; and all these books and lectures are just as misty and incomprehensible as the theological treatises and sermons, and, like the theological treatises, they attain their end, which is, to give an explanation of the existing order of things,

such as would make it possible for one set of men to be at rest, and not to work, and to enjoy the labours of other men.

The fact that for the investigations of this putative science they did not take the condition of the men of the whole world during all its historical existence as a model of the general order, but only the condition of men in small England, which has existed under exceptional conditions, at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, did not in the least interfere with the recognition of the truth of the propositions arrived at by the investigators, even as the endless disputes and differences of the leaders of this science, who cannot come to any agreement as to how to understand rentals, increased valuation, profit, etc., do not interfere with it at the present time. There is but one fundamental proposition of this science which is recognized by all, and that is, that human relations are not conditioned by what men consider good or bad, but by what is advantageous to the people who are already in an advantageous position.

What has been accepted as an indubitable truth is this, that, if in society there are bred a large number of robbers and thieves, who take from the labouring people the productions of their labour, this is not due to the fact that the robbers and thieves act badly, but because such are the unchangeable economic laws, which may be changed only by a slow evolution, is determined by science, and so, according to the doctrine of this science, the men who belong to the class of the robbers, thieves, or abettors, who enjoy the fruits of their robbery and stealing, may calmly continue to enjoy what they have stolen and taken by violence.

Though the majority of the men of our world do not know these soothing explanations of science, just as many former men did not know the details of the theological explanations which justified their position, — they none

the less know that this explanation exists, that the learned and wise men have incontrovertibly proved that the existing order of things is just what it ought to be, and that, therefore, we may calmly live in this order of things, without trying to change it.

It is only in this way that I am able to explain that remarkable blindness in which find themselves the good people of our society who sincerely wish the animals well, but with an easy conscience feast on the lives of their brothers.

## 4

The theory that God's will consists in this, that one set of men should rule another, for a long time eased men's consciences. But this theory, in justifying the cruelties of men, carried these cruelties to the utmost limits, and thus provoked opposition and doubts as to its truthfulness.

Even so now the theory that the economic evolution takes place according to inevitable laws, in consequence of which one set of men must hoard capital, while others must work all their lives, to increase this capital, while preparing themselves for the promised socialization of the tools of production, — by provoking an even greater cruelty of one set of men against all others, — is beginning now, especially amidst simple men who are not stultified by science, to provoke certain doubts.

You see, for example, the freight-handlers, who are ruining their lives by their work of thirty-seven hours' duration, or the women in the factory, or the laundresses, or the compositors, or all those millions of people who live under grievous, unnatural conditions of monotonous, stultifying slave labour, and you naturally ask: "What has brought these people to such a state, and how can they be liberated from it?" And science answers you that these men are in such a state, because the railroad

belongs to such and such a company, the silk factory to such and such a master, and all the plants, factories, printing offices, laundries, to capitalists, in general, and that this situation will improve if the working people, by uniting into unions and coöperative societies and by means of strikes and of participation in the government exerting an ever greater influence upon their masters and the government, will attain, at first a shortening of the work-day and an increase of the wages, and finally this, that all the implements of production will pass into their hands, and then all will be well; but now everything is going the way it ought to, and there is no need of changing anything.

This answer cannot help but appear very strange to unlearned men, particularly to unlearned Russians. In the first place, neither in relation to the freight-handlers, nor to the women, nor to the many millions of other workers, who suffer from the hard, unhealthy, stultifying labour, does the belonging of the implements of production to the capitalist offer any explanation. The implements of production in agriculture which belong to the labourers who are living now at the railroad have not been seized by the capitalists at all; these labourers have land, and horses, and ploughs, and harrows, and everything needed for the cultivation of the soil; even so the women who work in the factory are not driven to this work because the implements of production have been taken from them; on the contrary, they generally go away from home against the will of the elder members of the family, though their work is very much needed there, and though there are there all the implements of production. In the same condition are millions of labourers, both in Russia and in other countries. Thus the cause of the wretched condition of the working people can by no means be found in the seizure by the capitalists of the implements of production. The cause



must be found in what drives them out of the village. So much in the first place. In the second place, neither the shortening of the work-day, nor the increase in wages, nor the promised socialization of the implements of production, can in any way free the working people from this state, even in that distant future, when science promises them that liberation.

All that cannot improve their condition, because the wretchedness of the position of the working people, upon the railroad, or in the silk factory, or in any other factory or plant, does not consist in a greater or lesser number of working hours (the agriculturists work, while quite satisfied with their lot, as much as eighteen hours a day and thirty-six hours in succession), and not in the small pay, and not in this, that the railroad or factory does not belong to them, but in this, that the working people are obliged to work under injurious, unnatural, and frequently dangerous and pernicious conditions of life, in city barracks, full of temptations and immorality, and to do slave work for other people.

Of late the hours of work have been reduced and the pay has been increased, but this reduction of the hours of labour and the increase of pay have not improved the condition of the working people, if we do not consider their more luxurious habits,—a watch and chain, silk kerchiefs, tobacco, wine, meat, beer, and so forth,—but their real welfare, that is, their health and morality, and, above all, their freedom.

In the factory of silk articles with which I am acquainted, twenty years ago there worked mainly men who worked fourteen hours a day and earned fifteen roubles clear a month, which they generally sent home to their families in the country. Now it is mostly women who work there: they work eleven hours a day and earn sometimes as much as twenty-five roubles per month, or more than fifteen roubles clear; they generally do not

send the earnings home, but spend them here, chiefly on dresses, drunkenness, and debauchery ; and the reduction of hours of labour only increases the time passed by them at the inns.

The same, in a greater or lesser measure, takes place in all the factories and plants. Everywhere, in spite of the reduction of the hours of labour and the increase of pay, the health, as compared with that in agricultural work, is injured, the average length of life is diminished, and morality is lost, as, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, when we consider how they are removed from the conditions, most conducive to morality, of family life and free, healthy, varied, sensible agricultural labour.

It may be, as some economists assert, that with the reduction of hours of labour, the increase of wages, and the improvement of sanitary conditions in the factories, the health of the working people and their morality is improved as compared with the condition in which the factory hands used to be formerly. It may be even that of late and in certain localities the condition of the working people in the factories has in external conditions been better than the condition of the rural population. But this is true for only some localities and is due to this, that the government and society are doing, under the influence of the propositions of science, everything that can be done for the deterioration of the rural population and for the improvement of the condition of the factory hands.

If the condition of the factory hands is in certain localities — and that, too, only in external conditions — better than the condition of rural labourers, this only proves that with all kinds of oppressions it is possible to reduce to wretchedness a life which from external conditions is best, and that there does not exist so unnatural and bad a condition but that a man can adapt himself to it and remain in it for several generations.

The wretchedness of the condition of the factory hand and of the city workman in general does not consist in his working long and getting little for it, but in this, that he is deprived of the natural conditions of life in the midst of nature, is deprived of liberty, and is obliged to do monotonous slave work for another.

And so the answer to the questions as to why factory and city labourers are in a wretched state, and how to help them, can nowise consist in this, that it is due to the fact that the capitalists have seized the implements of production, and that the reduction of the hours of labour, the increase of wages, and the socialization of the implements of production will improve the position of the working people.

The answer to these questions must consist in the indication of the causes which have deprived the labourers of the natural conditions of life amidst nature and have driven them into the slavery of the factories, and in the indication of the means for liberating the working people from the necessity of passing from the free life in the country to the slave life in the factories.

Thus the question as to why the working people in the cities are in a wretched state includes first of all the question as to what are the causes which drove these people away from the country, where they or their ancestors lived and could live and with us in Russia still live, and what it is that against their will has been driving them into the factories and plants.

If there are such working people, as in England, Belgium, Germany, who for several generations have been living in factories, even these do not do so of their own free will, but because their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were for some reason obliged to change their agricultural life, which they liked, for a life in the city and in the factories, which presented itself to them as hard. The rural population was at first forcibly dispos-

sessed of its land, says K. Marx, and driven out and reduced to the state of vagrancy, and then, by force of cruel laws, they were tortured with tongs, hot iron, scourges, for the purpose of making them submit to the demands of private labour. And so the question as to how to liberate the working people from their wretched condition would seem naturally to reduce itself to the question as to how to remove those causes which have driven several and now drive away the rest from that condition which these people have regarded as good and have driven them into a condition which they have regarded as bad.

But the economic science, though it in passing points out the causes which have driven the labourers away from the land, does not busy itself with the removal of these causes, but turns all its attention only to the amelioration of the condition of the working people in the existing factories and plants, as though assuming that the condition of the working people in these plants and factories is something unchangeable, something which must by all means remain for those who are already in the factories, and must become the condition of those who have not yet left the villages and agricultural labour.

Not only has the economic science become convinced that all the rural labourers must inevitably pass through the condition of the city workers in the factories, but also, despite the fact that all the sages and poets of the world have always looked only in the conditions of agricultural labour for the realization of the ideal of human happiness; despite the fact that all working people with uncorrupted habits have always preferred agricultural labour to any other; despite the fact that work in the factories is always unhealthy and monotonous, while agricultural work is most healthy and varied; despite the fact that agricultural labour is always free, that is, that the labourer

at his will alternates between work and rest, while work in the factory, even though it all should belong to the working people, is always slavish, in dependence on the machine; despite the fact that factory work is secondary, while agricultural is basic, so that without it no factories could exist, — despite all that, the economic science asserts that the country people not only do not suffer from changing the country for the city, but even wish for it themselves and strive for it.

## 5

No matter how unjust is the assertion of the men of science that the good of humanity must consist in that which is profoundly repulsive to human sentiment, in monotonous, slavish labour in the factories, the men of science have inevitably been led to the necessity of this obviously unjust assertion, just as the theologians were inevitably led to just as obviously unjust an assertion that the slaves and the masters are different beings, and that the inequality of their conditions in this world will be requited in the world to come.

The cause of this obviously unjust assertion is this, that the men who have been establishing the propositions of science have belonged to the well-to-do classes, and have been so accustomed to those advantageous conditions amidst which they live that they do not even admit the idea that society could exist outside these conditions.

But the conditions of life to which the men of the well-to-do classes have become accustomed are that abundant production of various objects necessary for their comforts and pleasures which are obtained only, thanks to the now existing factories and plants, as they are arranged at the present time. And so, in discussing the amelioration of the working people's condition, the men of science, who belong to the well-to-do classes, always assume only an

amelioration such that the production of the factories will remain the same, and so the comforts of life which they will enjoy will also remain the same.

Even the most advanced men of science, the socialists, in demanding a complete transference of the implements of production to the working people, assume that the production of the same or nearly the same articles as at present will be continued in the same or similar factories with the present division of labour.

According to their conception, there will be only this difference, that then it will not be they alone, but also everybody else, who will enjoy those comforts which they are now enjoying all by themselves. They have a dim idea that with the socialization of the implements of labour they themselves, the men of science and, in general, the men of the ruling classes, will have a share in work, but for the most part in the shape of managers,—as draughtsmen, scholars, artists. But they preserve silence as to who will make white lead with muzzles on their faces, who will be the stokers, the miners, and the privy-cleaners, or they assume that all these things will be so perfected that even the work in the sewers and underground will form a pleasant occupation. Thus they present to themselves the economic life both in the utopias, like the utopia of Bellamy, and in learned treatises.

According to their theory, the working people, having all united into unions and societies, and having educated solidarity in themselves, will finally, by means of unions, strikes, and participation in parliaments, arrive at this, that they will get possession of all the implements of production, including the land; and then they will feed so well, will dress so well, will enjoy such amusements on Sundays, that they will prefer life in the city, amidst stones and chimneys, to the life in the country, in the broad expanse, amidst plants and domestic animals, and will prefer the monotonous machine work, according to

the whistle, to the varied, healthful, and free agricultural labour.

Though this assumption is as little probable as the assumption of the theologians concerning that heaven which the working people will enjoy in the world to come for having worked so painfully in this world, intelligent and cultured men of our circle none the less believe in this strange doctrine, just as former learned and intelligent people used to believe in a heaven for the working people in the world to come.

The learned and their disciples — people of the well-to-do classes — believe in this, because they cannot help believing in it. They are confronted with a dilemma: either they must see that everything which they enjoy in their life, from the railroad to matches and cigarettes, is their brothers' labour, which has cost many human lives, and that they, by not participating in this labour, but enjoying it, are very dishonest people, or that everything which takes place is done according to invariable laws of economic science for the general welfare. In this is contained that inner psychological cause, which compels the men of science, wise and cultured, but not enlightened men, with assurance and insistence to assert such an obvious untruth as that it is better for the good of the labourers to abandon their happy and healthy life amidst nature and to go to ruin their bodies and souls in factories and plants.

## 6

But even if we admit the obviously unjust assertion, which is contrary to all the properties of human nature, that it is better for people to live and work in factories and cities, doing mechanical slave work, than to live in the country and do free manual labour, — even if we admit all that, the very ideal, toward which, according to the teaching of the men of science, the economic evo-

lution leads, contains such an internal contradiction as can in no way be disentangled. This ideal consists in this, that the working people, having become the masters of all the implements of production, will enjoy all those comforts and pleasures which are now enjoyed only by well-to-do people. All will be well dressed and housed and fed, will walk over an asphalt pavement under electric lights, will attend concerts and theatres, read newspapers and books, will go out driving in motors, and so forth. But for all men to use certain articles, it is necessary to redistribute the manufacture of desirable articles, to determine how much time each working man is to work : how is this to be determined ?

Statistical data may determine (very imperfectly at that) men's needs in a society which is fettered by capitalism, competition, and want ; but no statistical data will show how many and what articles are necessary for the gratification of the needs of a society, in which the implements of production will belong to society itself, that is, where men will be free.

It will be absolutely impossible to determine the needs in such a society, because the needs will in such a society always be infinitely greater than the possibility of gratifying them. Everybody will desire to have everything which the rich now have, and so there is no possibility of determining the quantity of articles needed by such a society.

Besides, how can people be made to agree to produce articles which some of them will consider necessary, while others will consider them unnecessary or even quite harmful ?

If it shall be found that for the gratification of the needs of society it will be necessary for every person to work, say, six hours a day, who will compel a man in a free society to work these six hours when he knows that some of the hours are used for the production of



articles which he considers unnecessary and even harmful?

There is no doubt that with the present structure of society they produce with a great economy of forces, thanks to machines and, above all, to the division of labour, extremely complicated, most varied articles, which are carried to the highest degree of perfection, the production of which is advantageous to their masters, and the use of which we find very convenient and agreeable; but the fact that these articles are in themselves well done and with a small waste of energy, and that we find them indispensable for ourselves, does not prove that free people would without constraint produce the same articles. There is no doubt but that Krupp with the present division of labour makes beautiful cannon in a short time and in an artistic manner, and that N—— similarly produces coloured silk stuffs, and S—— perfumes, smooth cards, face-powder, which saves the complexion, and Popóv delicious whiskey, and so forth,— that this is very advantageous, both for the proprietors of the establishments where they are produced and for the consumers of them. But cannon, perfume, and whiskey are desirable for those who want to conquer the Chinese markets, or like drunkenness, or are interested in the preservation of the complexion, and there will always be some people who will find the production of these articles injurious. And, to say nothing of such articles, there will always be some people who will find that exhibitions, academies, beer, meat, are unnecessary and even harmful. How are these men to be compelled to take part in the production of such articles?

But even if people shall find a means for having all men agree to manufacture certain articles,— though there can be no such means except compulsion,— who will in a free society, without capitalistic production, without competition or supply and demand, determine upon what

articles the forces are chiefly to be directed? what is to be produced first, what later? Are they first to build a Siberian road and fortify Port Arthur, and then lay out a highway through the counties, or vice versa? Which is to be provided for first, — electric lights or the irrigation of the fields? And then again the insoluble question in connection with the freedom of the working people as to who shall do this or that work. Obviously, it will be most pleasant for all people to busy themselves with the sciences or with drawing, rather than to be a stoker or a privy-cleaner. How can people be made happy in this distribution?

No statistical data will answer these questions. There can be but a theoretical solution to these questions, that is, such a solution as that there will be men to whom the power will be given to manage all that. One set of men will decide these questions, and other men will obey them.

But, in addition to the question of the division and direction of production and the choice of work in the socialization of the implements of production, there appears also the chief question, — as to the degree of the division of labour which may be established in a society which is organized on socialistic principles. The present division of labour is conditioned by the wants of the working people. A workman agrees to live all his life under ground, or all his life to produce one-hundredth part of a certain article, or all his life monotonously to swing his arms amidst a rumble of machines, only because without that he will not have any means of support. But a workman who shall be in possession of the implements of production, and who, therefore, will not be suffering want, will only through compulsion agree to enter into conditions of the division of labour which dull and kill all the mental capacities and under which people work now. The division of labour is unquestionably very advan-

tageous and proper for people, but, if men are free, the division of labour is possible only to a certain narrow limit, which has long ago been crossed in our society.

If one peasant from preference plies the shoemaker's trade, while his wife attends to the loom, and another peasant ploughs, and a third peasant works in the smithy, and all of them, having acquired exceptional agility in their work, later exchange their products, such a division is advantageous for all of them, and free people will naturally thus divide their labour among themselves. But a division of labour under which a mechanic all his life produces one-hundredth part of an article, or a stoker in a foundry works in a temperature of fifty degrees Réaumur or in noxious gases which choke him, is disadvantageous for men, because, while producing the most trifling articles, it ruins the most precious article, man's life. Consequently the division of labour which now exists can exist only under compulsion. Rodbertus says that the division of labour unites humanity communistically. That is true, but it is only the free division of labour, that is, such that people of their own free will divide the labour, that unites humanity. If people decide to build a road, and one man digs, another hauls rock, a third breaks rock, and so forth, such a division of labour unites men. But if a strategic railway, or an Eiffel tower, or all those foolish things with which the Paris Exposition is full, are built independently of the desire and frequently even contrary to the desire of the working people, — and one labourer is compelled to mine the ore, another to haul coal, a third to smelt this ore, a fourth to cut down trees and square them, none of them having the slightest idea of the purpose of the articles prepared by them, such a division of labour not only does not unite them, but, on the contrary, disunites them.

And so, if people will be free in the socialization of the implements of labour, they will accept only such a

division of labour that the good of this division will be greater than the evil which it will cause the labourer.

And since every man naturally sees his good in the expansion and diversity of his activity, the now existing division of labour will naturally be impossible in a free society.

And as soon as the present division of labour shall be changed, there will also be diminished (to a very great extent) the very production of those articles which we now use, and which, it is assumed, all society will use in the socialistic state.

The assumption that with the socialization of the implements of production there will be the same abundance of articles as is produced under the compulsory division of labour, is like the assumption that with the liberation of the serfs there would remain the same domestic orchestras, gardens, rugs, lace, theatres, which used to be produced by the serfs. Thus the assumption that with the realization of the socialistic ideal all men will be free and, at the same time, will enjoy everything, or almost everything, which the well-to-do classes now enjoy, contains an obvious inner contradiction.

## 7

The same is here repeated that existed in the times of the serf law. As then the majority of the serf-owners and of the well-to-do classes in general, though recognizing the condition of the serfs as not entirely good, proposed for its improvement only such changes as would not impair the chief advantage of the landed proprietor, even so the men of the well-to-do classes, though recognizing the condition of the working people as not quite good, now propose for its improvement only such measures as do not impair the advantageous position of the men of the well-to-do classes. As then a well-disposed

proprietor talked of paternal power and, like Gógol, advised the proprietors to be good and to care for their serfs, but did not even admit the idea of the emancipation—which presented itself to him as harmful and dangerous, so also now the majority of the well-to-do people of our time advise the masters to care more for the good of their workmen, but equally do not even admit the idea of such a change of the economic structure of life as would make the working people entirely free.

And just as then the advanced liberals, recognizing the condition of the serfs to be unchangeable, demanded of the state the limitation of the masters' power and sympathized with the agitation of the serfs, so now the liberals of our time, recognizing the existing order as invariable, demand of the government the limitation of the capitalists and manufacturers, and sympathize with the unions, the strikes, and in general the agitation of the working people. And just as then the most advanced people demanded the emancipation of the serfs, but in the project left them in dependence on the landowners, or on *corvées* and taxes, so now the most advanced men demand the liberation of the working people from the capitalists, the socialization of the implements of production, but with all that leave the working people in dependence on the present distribution and division of labour, which, in their opinion, must remain invariable. The teaching of economic science, which is followed without a comprehension of its details by all the well-to-do people who consider themselves enlightened and advanced, at a superficial glance appears liberal, even radical, in that it contains attacks upon the rich classes of society, but in its essence this teaching is in the highest degree conservative, coarse, and cruel. In one way or another the men of science, and with them all the well-to-do classes, want by all means to retain the now existing distribution and division of labour, which make it possible to produce the large

quantity of articles used by them. The existing economic structure the men of science, and with them all the men of the well-to-do classes, call civilization, and they see in this civilization—the railways, telegraphs, telephones, photographs, Röntgen rays, clinics, exhibitions, and, above everything else, all the appliances of comfort—something so sacred that they do not even admit the idea of changes which may destroy all that or even a small part of these acquisitions. Everything may, according to the teaching of that science, be changed, except what they call civilization. Meanwhile it becomes more and more evident that this civilization can exist only by compelling the working men to work. But the men of science are so convinced that this civilization is the highest good that they boldly say the very opposite of what the jurists used once to say: instead of "*Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*," they now say, "*Fiat cultura, pereat justitia*." They not only say so, but even act so. Everything may be changed in practice and in theory, except civilization,—except all that which takes place in foundries and factories and, above all things, is sold in shops.

But I think that enlightened men, who profess the Christian law of brotherhood and love of their neighbours, ought to say the very opposite:

"It is all very nice to have electric illumination, telephones, expositions, and all the Arcadian Gardens with their concerts and shows, and all the cigars, and match-boxes, and suspenders, and motors; but may they go to perdition, and not only they, but also the railways and all the calico and cloth factories in the world, if for their production it is necessary that ninety-nine hundredths of men should be in slavery and should perish by the thousand in factories which are necessary for the production of these articles. If, to light London or St. Petersburg with electricity, or to erect the structures of an exhibition, or to produce beautiful dyes, or to get beautiful stuffs woven

quickly and in great quantity, it is necessary that the smallest number of lives should perish or be contracted or ruined (and statistics show us how many of them perish), then let London and St. Petersburg be lighted by gas or oil, let there be no exhibitions, let there be no dyes, no stuffs, so long as there shall be no slavery and the ruin of human lives resulting from it."

Truly enlightened people will always prefer to return to travelling on horseback and on bales and even to digging the ground with sticks and hands, rather than travel on railways, which regularly kill so many people each year, only because the owners of the roads find it more profitable to pay damages to the families of the killed than to build the roads in such a way that they will not kill so many people, as is the case in Chicago. The motto of truly enlightened men is not "*Fiat cultura, pereat justitia*," but "*Fiat justitia, pereat cultura*."

But civilization, the useful civilization, will not be destroyed. People will never have any occasion to return to digging the ground with sticks and lighting up their houses with chips. Not in vain has humanity with its servile structure made such great progress in the technical arts.

If men shall come to understand that it is not right for their pleasure to exploit the lives of their brothers, they will find out how to apply all the discoveries of mechanics in such a way as not to ruin the lives of their brothers, will know how to arrange life in such a way as to use all the perfected instruments for the subjugation of nature they can use, without retaining their brothers in slavery.

## 8

Let us imagine a man from an entirely foreign country who has no idea about our history and our laws, and let us show him our life in all its manifestations and ask

him what chief difference he observes in the manner of life of the men of our world.

The chief difference in the manner of life of the men to which he will point will be this, that some—a small number of men—with clean white hands are well fed, clothed, and housed, work very little and at something easy, or not at all, and only amuse themselves, wasting on these amusements millions of hard working days of other men; while others, always dirty and poorly clad, poorly housed, and poorly fed, with dirty, callus-covered hands, work without cessation from morning until evening, at times through the nights, for those who do not work, but amuse themselves all the time.

If it is hard between the slaves and the slave-owners of the present time to draw as sharp a line as the one which separated the former slaves from the slave-owners, and if among the slaves of our time there are such as are only temporarily slaves and later become slave-owners, or such as at the same time are slaves and slave-owners, this mingling of the two at their points of contact does not weaken the truth of the proposition that all the men of our time are divided into slaves and masters, just as definitely as, in spite of the twilight, the twenty-four hours are divided into day and night.

If a slave-owner of our time has not an Iván whom he can send into a privy to clean out his excrements, he has three roubles which are so much wanted by hundreds of Iváns, that he can choose any one out of a hundred Iváns and appear as a benefactor to him, because he has chosen him out of the whole number and has permitted him to climb into the cesspool.

The slaves of our time are not merely all those factory and foundry hands who, to exist, are obliged to sell themselves into the full possession of the masters of factories and foundries; such slaves are also nearly all those agriculturists who, without rest, work in other people's



fields, taking other people's corn to other people's granaries, or who work their own fields, only to be able to pay interest on unextinguishable debts to the bankers; and just such slaves are all these numerous lackeys, cooks, chambermaids, janitors, coachmen, bath servants, waiters, and so forth, who all their lives perform duties which are most improper to a human being and contrary to their own natures.

Slavery exists in full force, but we do not recognize it, just as at the end of the eighteenth century people did not recognize the slavery of serfdom.

The men of that time believed that the state of the people who were obliged to work the land of their masters and to obey them, was a natural, inevitable condition of life, and did not call that state slavery.

The same is true among us: the men of our time regard the state of the working men as a natural, inevitable economic condition, and do not call this state slavery.

And, as at the end of the eighteenth century the men of Europe began slowly to see that the condition of the peasants who were in the full power of their masters, though formerly it had seemed to be a natural and inevitable form of economic life, was bad, unjust, and immoral, and demanded a change, so now the people of our time begin to understand that the state of hired men and of working people in general, which formerly used to be regarded as absolutely legal and normal, is not such as it ought to be, and demands a change.

The slavery of our time is now precisely in the same phase in which the serf law was in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, and serfdom in Russia and slavery in America were in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

The slavery of the working people of our time is just beginning to be recognized by the advanced men of our

society, but the majority of people are still fully convinced that there is no slavery among us.

The men of our time are supported in this wrong idea of their condition by the circumstance that we have just abolished slavery in Russia and America. In reality the abolition of serfdom and slavery was only the abolition of an obsolete, useless form of slavery, and the substitution for it of a more substantial form of slavery which embraced a greater number of slaves than formerly. The abolition of serfage and slavery was very much like what the Crimean Tartars did with their captives, when they decided to cut open the soles of their feet and fill the rents with chopped bristles. After performing this operation upon them, they took off their fetters and chains. Though the abolition of serfage in Russia and slavery in America did away with the older form of servitude, it was, indeed, accomplished only when the bristles in the soles had created ulcers, and there was an absolute certainty that the captives would not run away even without fetters and chains, and would go on working. (The Northerners in America boldly demanded the abolition of the old slavery, because a new, the financial slavery, had already obviously taken possession of the people, while the Southerners did not yet see the obvious signs of the new slavery and so did not care to abolish the old slavery.)

With us, in Russia, serfage was abolished only when all the land was already taken up. If land was given to the peasants, taxes were imposed upon them, to take the place of the land slavery. In Europe the taxes which kept the people in slavery were abolished only when the people were deprived of the land, made unaccustomed to agricultural labour, and by means of an infection from city needs placed in complete dependence on the capitalists. It was only then that the corn taxes were abolished in England. Now they are beginning to abolish

the taxes on the labourers in Germany and in other countries, transferring them to the rich, only because the majority of the people are in the power of the capitalists. One means of enslavement is abolished only when another has taken its place. There are several such means. If not one, another, a third means, or several together, keep the people in servitude, that is, put them in such a condition that a few men have full power over the labours and lives of a greater number of men. In this enslavement of the greater part of the people by a smaller part does the chief cause of the wretched condition of the people consist. For this reason the means for ameliorating the condition of working people must consist, in the first place, in recognizing the fact that slavery exists among us, not in any transferred, metaphorical sense, but in the simple and direct sense of the word,—a slavery which keeps one part of men, the majority, in the power of the other, the minority, and, in the second place, having recognized this condition, in finding the causes of the enslavement of one set of men by others, and, in the third place, having found these causes, in destroying them.

## 9

In what, then, does the slavery of our time consist? What forces enslave one class of men to another? If we ask all the working people, in Russia, in Europe, and in America, both in the factories and in all kinds of hired occupations in the cities and the villages, what it is that has compelled them to choose the condition in which they are,—they will all say that they were brought to it by this: either that they had no land on which they could and would wish to live and work (all Russian working men and many European ones will say so); or that taxes, both direct and indirect, are demanded of them, and they are not able to pay them unless they work for others; or,

again, that they are kept in the factories by the temptations of more luxurious habits which they have acquired and which they cannot gratify except by selling their labour and their freedom.

The first two conditions, the lack of land and the taxes, drive the men, as it were, into conditions of servitude, and the third, the unsatisfied increased needs, entices them into these conditions and retains them there.

It is possible to imagine, according to Henry George's project, the emancipation of the land from the right of personal ownership, and thus the destruction of the first cause which drives people into slavery,—the lack of land. We can equally imagine the abolition of the taxes, their transference to the rich, as is actually done in some countries; but with the present economic structure it is impossible to imagine such a state that amidst the rich people there would not establish themselves more and more luxurious, frequently harmful habits of life, and that these habits would not by degrees, as inevitably and as irrepressibly as the water is taken up by the dry earth, pass over to the working classes that are contiguous to the rich, and would not become so necessary to the working classes that the working people would be prepared to sell their freedom, in order to gratify them.

Thus this third condition, in spite of its arbitrariness, that is, in spite of the apparent ability of a man not to submit to the temptations, and in spite of the fact that science does not at all recognize it as a cause of the wretched condition of the working men, forms the most permanent and most ineffaceable cause of slavery.

Living near the rich, the working people are always infected by new needs and gain the possibility of always gratifying these needs, but only in proportion as they give the tensest labour for this gratification. Thus the working people of England and America, though occasionally receiving ten times as much as is needed for their sup-

port, continue to be the same slaves that they were formerly.

These three causes, according to the explanation of the working people themselves, produce the slavery in which they are; and the history of the enslavement of the working people and the reality of their condition confirm the justice of this explanation.

All the working people are brought to their present state and are retained in it by these three causes. These causes, acting upon people from various sides, are such that not one man can get away from their enslavement. An agriculturist, who has at his command no land whatsoever or only an insufficient amount of it, will always be compelled, if he wants to be able to gain his sustenance from the land, to give himself into permanent or temporary slavery to him who owns the land.

If he in one way or another acquires as much land as he needs to be able to support himself upon it with his labour, taxes will be demanded of him in a direct and an indirect way, such that, to be able to pay them, he will be obliged again to sell himself into slavery.

But if, to free himself from the slavery of the land, he shall stop working the land and, living on somebody else's land, shall begin to ply some trade, exchanging his productions for commodities needed by him, on the one hand the taxes, and on the other the competition of the capitalists who produce the same articles as he does, but with improved implements, will compel him to sell himself into permanent or temporary slavery to the capitalists. But if, working for a capitalist, he should be able to establish free relations with him, such as would not necessitate his giving up his freedom, the habits of the new needs inevitably acquired by him will compel him to do so.

Thus the working man will in one way or another always be in the slavery of those men who possess the

taxes, the land, and the commodities needed for the gratification of his needs.

## 10

The German socialists have called the aggregate of conditions which subject the labourers to the capitalists, the iron law of labour wages, meaning by the word "iron" that this law is something invariable. But in these conditions there is nothing invariable. These conditions are only the consequences of human enactments concerning taxes, concerning land, and, above all things, concerning commodities for the gratification of needs, that is, concerning property. But enactments are established and abolished by men. Thus it is not any iron, sociological laws, but enactments, that establish men's slavery. In the given case the slavery of our time is very clearly and very definitely produced, not by any elementary iron law, but by human enactments concerning land, taxes, and property. There exists an enactment about this, that any amount of land may be the subject of possession by private individuals, may pass from person to person by inheritance, bequest, or sale; there exists another enactment about this, that every man must without murmuring pay the taxes that are demanded of him; and there exists a third enactment about this, that any quantity of articles, no matter in what way acquired, forms the inalienable property of those men who own them; in consequence of these enactments slavery exists.

These enactments are so habitual to us that they present themselves to us as just such natural conditions of human life, of the necessity and justice of which there can be no doubt whatever, as in antiquity appeared to be the laws about serfage and slavery, and we do not see anything irregular in them. But, as there came the time when men, seeing the pernicious consequences of serfage, began to doubt the justice and necessity of the

enactments which asserted it, so now, when the pernicious consequences of the present economic structure are obvious, one comes involuntarily to doubt the justice and necessity of the enactments concerning land, taxes, and property, which produce these results.

As formerly they used to ask whether it is right that men should belong to others and that these men should not have anything of their own, but should give all the productions of their labour to their owners, so we should ask ourselves at present whether it is right that people should not be able to use the land which is considered to be the property of other men; whether it is right that men should give to others in the shape of taxes those portions of their labour which are demanded of them; whether it is right that people should not be permitted to use articles which are considered to be the property of others.

Is it right that men should not use the land, when it is considered to be the property of men who do not work it?

It is said that this law established itself, because ownership of the land is an indispensable condition for the success of agriculture, because, if there did not exist private property, which passes down by inheritance, people would be driving one another away from the land seized, and no one would work or improve the plot of land on which he sits. Is this true? The answer to this question is given by history and by the present state of affairs. History says that the ownership of land has by no means originated in the desire to secure the possession of the land, but in the appropriation of the common land by the conquerors and its distribution among those who served the conquerors. Thus the establishment of the ownership of land did not have for its aim the encouragement of agriculture. Now the present state of affairs shows us the groundlessness of the assertion that the ownership of land secures to the agriculturists the

conviction that they will not be deprived of the land which they work. In reality the very opposite takes place everywhere. The right of the ownership of the land, which the large owners have enjoyed more than any one else, has had this effect, that all, or nearly all, that is, the vast majority of the agriculturists, are now in the condition of men who work somebody else's land, from which they may be arbitrarily driven by those who do not work it. Thus the existing right of the ownership of the land is by no means a protection of the agriculturist's right to the use of that labour which he puts on the land, but, on the contrary, a means for taking from the agriculturists the land which they work and for transferring it to those who do not work it, and so it is in no way a means for the encouragement of agriculture, but it is, on the contrary, a means for deteriorating it.

Concerning the taxes it is asserted that men must pay them, because they are established by common, though tacit, consent, and are used for public needs, and for the good of all.

Is that true?

The answer to this question is given by history and by the present state of affairs. History says that taxes have never been established by common consent, but, on the contrary, always in consequence of this, that certain men, having by conquest or other means gained the power over other men, have imposed tribute upon them, not for public needs, but for themselves. The same thing is done even at the present time. The taxes are collected by those who have the power to do so. If now a part of this tribute, called taxes and imposts, is used for public works, these public works are for the most part harmful, rather than useful, to the majority of men.

Thus, for example, one-third of the people's income is taken away from the people in Russia, but for the chief need, for the people's education, only one-fiftieth of the



whole income is used, and this, too, for such education as rather stultifies and harms the people than does them any good. The remaining forty-nine fiftieths are used for things that are useless or injurious for the people, such as the arming of soldiers, strategic roads, fortresses, prisons, the maintenance of the clergy and the courts, salaries for military and civil officials, that is, for the support of those men who aid in the seizure of the money from the people.

The same thing takes place, not only in Persia, Turkey, and India, but also in all the Christian, constitutional governments and democratic republics: the money is taken from the masses of the people,—not as much as is wanted, but as much as can be taken from them,—and quite independently of the consent of the taxed (everybody knows how the parliaments are made up and how little they represent the will of the people), and is not used for the common good, but for what the ruling classes deem best: for the war in Cuba and the Philippines, for the seizure and retention of the wealth of the Transvaal, and so forth. Thus the explanation given that people must pay taxes, because they are established by common consent and are used for the common good, is as untrue as the other assertion that the ownership of land was established for the purpose of encouraging agriculture.

Is it right that people should not use articles which they want for the gratification of their needs, if these articles form the property of other men?

It is asserted that the right of the ownership of articles acquired was established for the purpose of securing the working man against the seizure of the productions of his labour by any one else.

Is that true?

We need only look at what is going on in our world, where such ownership is protected with especial care, to

convince ourselves to what extent the actuality of our life does not confirm this explanation.

In consequence of the right of ownership of acquired articles, there is in our society taking place precisely what this right intends to avoid, namely, all the articles which have been produced by the working people are, in proportion as they are produced, constantly taken away from those who produce them.

Thus the assertion that the right of ownership secures to the working people the possibility of enjoying the productions of their labour is obviously still more unjust than the justification of the ownership of land, and is based on the same sophism. At first the working people are unjustly and violently deprived of the productions of their labour, and then the laws are enacted, according to which these productions, which were unjustly and violently seized from the working people, are recognized as an inalienable possession of the usurpers.

The ownership of a factory, for example, which is acquired by a series of deceits and rascalities committed against the working people, is considered to be a product of labour and is called a sacred ownership; but the lives of those working people, who perish in working in this factory, and their labour are not considered to be their property, but are, as it were, considered to be the property of the manufacturer, if he, exploiting the want of the working people, has bound them in a manner which is regarded as legal.

Hundreds of thousands of puds of corn collected by means of usury and a series of exactions from the peasants, are considered to be the property of the merchant; but the corn raised by the peasants on the land is considered to be the property of another man, if this man has received the land as an inheritance from his grandfather and great-grandfather, who took it away from the people. It is said that the law protects equally the prop-

erty of the owner of a factory, the capitalist, the landowner, and the factory hand and agricultural labourer. The equality of the capitalist and the labourer is the same as the equality of two fighters, when the hands of one are bound, while a gun is put into the hands of the other, and equal conditions are strictly observed for both in the fight. Thus all the explanations of the justice and indispensableness of those three enactments which produce slavery are as incorrect as were the explanations of the justice and indispensableness of the former serfage. All three enactments are nothing but the establishment of that new form of slavery which has taken the place of the older slavery. As formerly the establishment of enactments as to this, that men might buy and sell people and own them, and might compel them to work, *was* slavery; so now the establishment of the enactments as to this, that men cannot use the land which is considered to be the property of another, must pay the taxes demanded of them, and cannot use the articles which are considered to be somebody else's property, *is* the slavery of our time.

## 11

The slavery of our time is due to three enactments, — concerning land, concerning taxes, and concerning property. And so all the attempts of men who wish to improve the condition of the working people are of necessity, though unconsciously, directed to these three enactments.

Some abolish the taxes which weigh upon the working people, by transferring them to the rich; others propose to do away with the right of the ownership of land, and there have been made attempts at realizing this, in New Zealand and in one of the States of America (an approach to it is also the limitation of the right to dispose of the land in Ireland); others again, the socialists, assuming the socialization of the implements of labour, propose the

taxing of incomes, and inheritances, and the limitation of the rights of the capitalists, — the speculators. It would seem that those very enactments which produce slavery are being abolished, and that we may on this path expect the abolition of slavery itself. But we need only look more closely at the conditions under which the abolition of these enactments is accomplished and proposed, in order to become convinced that all, not only practical, but even theoretical projects for the improvement of the working men's condition, are only the substitution for one set of enactments, which produce slavery, of other enactments, which establish the new forms of slavery. Thus, for example, those who do away with the taxes and imposts levied on the poor, by first abolishing the enactments about the direct imposts, and later transferring these imposts from the poor to the rich, must necessarily retain and do retain the enactments about the ownership of land, implements of production, and other commodities, to which the whole burden of taxation is transferred. But the retention of the enactments about land and property, by freeing the working people from the taxes, turns them over into slavery to the landowners and capitalists. And those who, like Henry George and his followers, do away with the enactments about ownership, propose new enactments about a compulsory land rent. But the compulsory land rent will inevitably establish a new form of slavery, because a man, obliged to pay the rent, or single tax, will be compelled at every failure of crops and at every misfortune to borrow money from him who has it, and will again fall into slavery. And those who, like the socialists, in their project do away with the enactments about the ownership of land and the implements of production, retain the enactments about the taxes and, besides, are obliged to introduce enactments about compelling men to work, that is, again establish slavery in its primitive form.

Thus, in one way or another, all the practical and theoretical abolitions of one set of enactments which produce slavery of one kind have so far always been followed by new enactments which produce slavery of another, a new kind.

What is taking place is very much like what a jailer does, when he changes the chains from the neck to the arms, or from the arms to the legs, or when he takes them off, but fastens the bolts and bars.

All the ameliorations for the working people so far proposed have consisted in nothing else.

The enactments about the masters' right to force the slaves to do work have given way to enactments about the ownership of the whole land by the masters. The enactments about the ownership of the whole land by the masters has given way to enactments about taxes, the establishment of which is in the power of the masters. The enactments about taxes has given way to the strengthening of the right to own articles of use and implements of labour. The enactments about the right to own land, articles of use, and implements of production are now to be abandoned for the enactments about compulsory labour.

The primitive form of slavery was the direct compulsion to work. Having made the whole circle of the different latent forms, — ownership of land, taxes, ownership of articles of use and implements of production, — slavery now returns to its primitive form, though in a changed aspect, — to the direct compulsion to work.

Therefore it is obvious that the abolition of one of the enactments which produces the slavery of our day — either of the taxes, or of the ownership of land, or of the ownership of articles of use and implements of production — will not destroy slavery, but will only abolish one of its forms, which will immediately give way to another, as was the case with the abolition of personal slavery — serfage — for taxes. The abolition of even all three enactments together will not destroy slavery, but will only

provoke a new, still unknown form of slavery, which even now is slowly manifesting itself in the enactment which reduces the freedom of the working people, in the limitation of the hours of work, age, condition of health, in the demands for an obligatory school attendance, in the reservation of a certain percentage to provide for the old and the maimed, in all the measures of factory inspections, in the rules of coöperative societies, and so forth. All these are nothing but advance enactments which are preparing a new, still unexperienced form of slavery.

Thus it becomes obvious that the essence of slavery does not lie in those three enactments on which it is now based, and not even in any kind of enactments, but in the fact that there are enactments, that there are men who are able to establish enactments which are advantageous for them, and that, so long as men shall have this power, there will be slavery.

Formerly it was advantageous for people to have direct slaves, and so they established the enactment about the personal slavery. Then it became advantageous to have land as property, to collect taxes, to retain acquired property, and corresponding enactments were made. Now it is advantageous for people to retain the existing distribution and division of labour, and enactments are introduced, such as would compel people to work with the existing distribution and division of labour. And so the fundamental cause of slavery is enactments,—the fact that there are men who are able to introduce them.

## 12

What, then, are enactments, and what gives men the power to establish them?

There exists a whole science, which is more ancient and more deceptive and hazy than political economy, and the servants of which have in the course of the centuries

written millions of books (which for the most part contradict one another), in order to answer these questions. But since the aim of this science, as of political economy, does not consist in explaining what is and what ought to be, but in proving that that which is ought to be as it is, we are able in this science to find very many discussions about right, about object and subject, about the idea of the state, and so forth,—about subjects which are obscure, not only to the students, but also to the teachers of this science; but there is no lucid answer to the question as to what an enactment is.

According to the science, an enactment is an expression of the will of the whole people; but since there are always more men who violate the enactments, or who wish to violate them but do not do so from fear of the punishments imposed for the non-fulfilment of the enactments, than those who wish to fulfil them, it is evident that the enactments can in no sense be understood as the expression of the will of the whole people.

There exist, for example, enactments about not destroying telegraph-posts, about showing respect to certain persons, about the obligation for every man to do military service or be a juror, or about not carrying certain objects beyond a certain line, or about not using the land which is considered to be the property of another, or about not making any monetary tokens, or about not using articles which are considered to be the property of some one else.

All these enactments and many others are extremely varied and may have the most varied motives, but not one of them expresses the will of the whole people. There is but one common feature to all these enactments, namely, this, that if a man will not fulfil them, those who established them will send armed men, and the armed men will beat, deprive of liberty, and even kill him who does not fulfil them.

If a man does not wish to give in the form of taxes

the portion of his labour demanded of him, armed men will come and take from him what is demanded, and, if he offers resistance, will beat him, deprive him of liberty, or even kill him. The same thing will be done with a man who will use the land which is regarded as somebody else's property. The same thing will happen to a man who will make use of articles considered to be the property of some one else, which he needs for the gratification of his needs or for work: armed men will come, will take from him what he has taken, and, if he offers resistance, will beat him, deprive him of liberty, or even kill him. The same thing will happen with a man who will not show respect to what it is enacted that respect shall be shown to, and with him who will not comply with the demand to become a soldier, or who will make monetary tokens. For every non-fulfilment of established enactments those who do not fulfil them will be punished: they will be subjected to personal injury, to the loss of liberty, and even to being killed at the hands of those men who have established these enactments.

Very many constitutions have been invented, beginning with the English and the American and ending with the Japanese and the Turkish, by which people are to believe that all the enactments established in their state are established by their own will. But all men know that not only in despotic, but also in assumedly free countries, in England, America, France, and elsewhere, the enactments are established, not by the will of all men, but only by the will of those who have the power, and so they always are such as are advantageous for those who have the power, — be they many, a few, or even one man. And the enactments are always and everywhere executed by the same means by which men have always and everywhere been compelled to do the will of others, that is, by means of personal injury, loss of liberty, murder, as, indeed, it cannot be otherwise.



It cannot be otherwise, because the enactments are the demand for the fulfilment of certain rules; but people cannot be compelled to fulfil certain rules, that is, what is wanted of them, except by subjecting them to personal injuries, loss of liberty, and capital punishment. If there are enactments, there has to be the power which can make men fulfil them. There is but one power which can compel men to fulfil these rules, that is, the will of other men, and that is — violence, not simple violence, which is used by men against one another in moments of passion, but organized violence, which is consciously employed by men who have power, in order to compel other men to fulfil rules which are always established by them, that is, what they want.

Therefore the essence of the enactments is not at all the subject or object of right, not the idea of the state, nor the aggregate will of the people, and similar indefinite and confused conditions, but is this, that there are men who, in control of organized violence, are able to compel people to do their will.

Thus a definite, comprehensible, and indisputable definition of enactments will be like this:

Enactments are rules established by men who are in control of organized violence, for the non-fulfilment of which those who do not fulfil them are subjected to personal injuries, the loss of liberty, and even capital punishment.

In this definition is contained the answer to the question as to what gives men the power to establish enactments. What gives them the power to establish enactments is the same which secures the execution of the enactments, — organized violence.

### 13

The cause of the wretched condition of the working people lies in slavery. The cause of slavery lies in the

enactments. But the enactments are based on organized violence.

Consequently the amelioration of men's condition is possible only with the destruction of organized violence.

But organized violence is the government, and is it possible to live without any government? Without government there will be chaos and anarchy, all the progress of civilization will perish, and men will return to their pristine savagery. "Just touch the existing order of things," we are generally told, not only by those for whom this order of things is advantageous, but also by those for whom it is obviously disadvantageous, but who are so used to it that they cannot imagine life without any governmental violence, "and the destruction of government will produce the greatest calamities, riots, pillage, murder, and in the end all the bad will rule, and the good will be enslaved by them." But, to say nothing of the fact that all that, namely, the riots, pillage, and murder, at the end of which will come the kingdom of the evil and the enslavement of the good, has existed so far and exists now, the supposition that the violation of the existing order will produce troubles and disorder does not prove that this order is good.

"Just put your hand on the existing order, and the greatest calamities will result."

Just touch one brick out of a thousand bricks placed in a slender column of a number of yards in height, and all the bricks will fall down and break. But the fact that the displacement of one brick or any push will destroy such a column and all the bricks does not at all prove that it is sensible to retain the bricks in an unnatural and unsuitable position. On the contrary, it proves that the bricks should not be kept in such a column, but should be placed in such a way as to remain firm and admit of being used without destroying the whole structure. The same is true with the present

political structure. The political structure is very artificial and very frail, and the fact that the slightest push destroys it does not prove that it is indispensable, but, on the contrary, shows that, if it ever was necessary, it is now entirely unnecessary, and therefore harmful and dangerous.

It is harmful and dangerous, because with this structure all the evil which exists in society is not only not diminished and mended, but also strengthened and confirmed. It is strengthened and confirmed, because it is either justified and clothed in attractive forms, or concealed.

All the well-being of the people as presented to us in the so-called well-managed states, which are governed through force, is nothing but seeming,—a fiction. Everything which can impair the external decency, all the hungry, sick, monstrously corrupt are hidden away in places where they cannot be seen, but their not being seen does not prove that they do not exist; on the contrary, there are the more of them, the more they are concealed and the more cruel to them those are who produce them. It is true, every violation, much more every cessation of the governmental activity, that is, of organized violence, will impair such external decency of life, but this violation will not produce a disorganization of life, but will only reveal the one that has been concealed, and will make it possible to mend it.

Men have thought and believed until recently, until the end of the present century, that they cannot live without any government. But life goes on, and the conditions of life and people's views change. And, in spite of the efforts of the governments, which are directed toward retaining people in this childish condition, in which it seems easier for an injured man when he has somebody to complain to, people, especially workmen, not only in Europe, but also in Russia, more and more come

out of their childhood and begin to understand the true conditions of their life.

“You tell us that without you we shall be vanquished by the neighbouring nations, by the Japanese, the Chinese,” now say the people from the masses, “but we read the newspapers and know that no one is threatening us with war and that only you, the rulers, for some reasons which are unknown to us, enrage one another, and then, under the pretext of defending your nations, ruin us with taxes for the support of fleets, armaments, strategic railways, which are needed only for your ambition and vanity, and start wars with one another, as you have just now done with the peace-loving Chinese. You say that you protect the landed property for our good, but your protection has resulted in this, that all the land is passing over into the hands of non-working companies, bankers, rich men, while we, the vast majority of the people, are landless and in the power of those who do not work. You with your laws about landed property do not protect landed property, but take it away from those who work. You say that you ensure to each man the productions of his labour, whereas you do the very opposite: all people who produce costly articles are, thanks to your supposed protection, put in such a condition that they never can get the value of their labour, and that their whole life is in dependence on the non-working people and in their power.”

Thus the people of the end of our century are beginning to understand matters and to talk. This awakening from the lethargy in which they were held by the governments is taking place in a rapidly increasing progression. Within the last five or six years the public opinion of the masses, not only in the cities, but also in the villages, not only in Europe, but also in Russia, has strikingly changed.

We are told that without the governments we shall

not have those cultural, educational, social establishments which all need.

But why assume this? Why think that non-governmental people will not be able to arrange their lives for themselves as well as they are arranged, not for themselves, but for others, by the governmental people?

We see, on the contrary, that in the most varied circumstances of life, people in our time arrange their lives for themselves incomparably better than they are arranged for them by the men who govern them. People without any interference from the government, and frequently in spite of the government's interference, establish all kinds of public enterprises, — labour unions, coöperative societies, railway companies, artéls, syndicates. If levies are needed for public works, why need we think that free people will not be able voluntarily and without violence to collect the necessary means and to establish everything which is established with the taxes, if only these institutions are useful for them? Why must we think that there cannot be any courts without violence? The judgment of men in whom the litigants have confidence has always existed and always will exist, and does not need violence. We have been so corrupted by a long slavery that we cannot imagine a government without violence. But that is not true. The Russian Communes, when settling in distant regions, where our government does not interfere with their life, arrange their own levies, their management, their court, their police, and always prosper, so long as governmental violence does not interfere with their management. Even so there is no reason for the assumption that people are unable by common agreement to distribute the use of the land among themselves.

I have known of people, — the Ural Cossacks, — who have lived without recognizing the ownership of land, and the prosperity and order in the whole society have

been such as do not exist in the society in which the ownership of land is protected by violence. I know of Communes at the present time, which exist without recognizing the right of separate individuals to own land. The whole Russian people within my memory did not recognize the ownership of land. The protection given to the ownership of land by means of governmental violence not only fails to remove the struggle for the ownership of land, but, on the contrary, for the most part strengthens it and brings it about.

If landed property were not protected, and so made to rise in value, people would not crowd in one place, but would settle on free land, of which there is still so much on the globe. But now there is taking place an incessant struggle for the ownership of land, and this struggle is waged with those instruments which the government offers with its enactments about the ownership of land. In this struggle the victory is always obtained, not by those who work the land, but by those who take part in the governmental violence.

The same is true in relation to articles produced by labour. Articles which are actually produced by man's labour and which are necessary for life are always protected by custom, public opinion, and the sense of justice and reciprocity, and are in no need of protection by means of violence.

Tens of thousands of desyatínas of forest land belonging to one owner, while thousands of people near by have no fuel, must be protected by violence. The same protection is needed for plants and factories where several generations of workmen have been plundered. Still more must such protection be given to hundreds of thousands of puds of corn belonging to one owner who has been waiting for a famine, in order to sell it at a trebled price to the starving population. But not a man, even the most corrupt, unless he be a rich man or a government

official, will take from an agriculturist who supports himself with his labour the crops which he has raised, or the cow which he has raised and which supplies the milk for his children, or the plough, the scythe, the spade, which he has made and used. Even if there should be found a man who would none the less take from another the articles produced by him and needed by him, that man would provoke such indignation against himself in all men who live under the same conditions that he would hardly find such an act advantageous for himself. But if that man is so immoral that he will none the less do so, he will do the same under the most stringent protection of property by means of violence. We are generally told: "Try to destroy the right to own land and articles of labour, and not one man, since he is not assured that they will not take from him what he has produced, will care to work." The very opposite ought to be said: the protection offered by means of violence to the right to hold illegal property, such as is offered at the present time, has, if not completely destroyed, at least considerably weakened in men the natural consciousness of justice in relation to the use of articles, that is, in relation to the natural and inborn right of property, without which humanity could not live, and which has always existed in society.

And so there is no foundation for the supposition that without organized violence men will not be able to arrange their lives.

Of course, it can be said that horses and oxen cannot live without the exercise of violence by rational beings — men — over them; but why cannot men live without violence being exerted over them, not by some higher beings, but by men themselves? Why must men submit to the violence of those men who at a given time are in power? What proves that these men are wiser than those men against whom the violence is exerted?

Their allowing themselves to exert violence against people proves that they are not only not wiser, but even less wise than those who submit to them. The Chinese examinations for the posts of mandarins, as we know, do not secure the wisest and best men for the power. Just as little is this secured by heredity, or by all the systems of rank promotions or of elections in the European states. On the contrary, those who get into power are generally less conscientious and less moral men than others.

We are asked: "How can men live without governments, that is, without violence?" We ought, on the contrary, to ask: "How can men, rational beings, live, recognizing violence, and not rational agreement, as the inner force of their lives?"

One or the other is true: either men are rational beings, or they are not. If they are irrational beings, they are all irrational beings, and there is no reason why some should enjoy the right to exert violence, while others do not enjoy this right, and then the violence exerted by the government has no justification. But if men are rational beings, their relations must be based on reason, and not on the violence of men who have accidentally seized the power, and therefore the violence of the government has again no justification.

#### 14

The slavery of men is due to enactments, and enactments are established by the governments, and so the liberation of men from slavery is possible only through the abolition of the governments.

But how are the governments to be destroyed?

All the attempts at destroying the governments by means of violence have so far everywhere and always led to this, that in the place of the governments over-



thrown there have been established new, frequently more cruel governments than those which they superseded.

To say nothing of the attempts already made at destroying the governments by means of violence, the now imminent destruction of the violence of the capitalists, that is, the socialization of the implements of production and the new economic structure, must, according to the theory of the socialists, be produced through a new organized form of violence, and this must be retained. Thus the attempts at destroying violence with violence, which so far have not in the past led, and obviously will not in the future lead, men to their emancipation from violence, and consequently from slavery.

Nor can it be otherwise.

Violence is exerted by one class of men against another (outside of outbursts of vengeance and anger) for no other purpose than to compel people against their wish to do the will of other men. But the necessity of doing against one's wish the will of other men is slavery. And so, as long as there shall be any violence, intended for the purpose of compelling people to do the will of other men, there will be slavery.

All the attempts at abolishing slavery by means of violence are like the extinguishing of fire with fire, or the damming of water with water, or the filling of one ditch with dirt taken out from another ditch.

And so the means for the emancipation from slavery, if it exists at all, must consist, not in the establishment of a new form of violence, but in the destruction of what produces the possibility of governmental violence. But the possibility of governmental violence, as of any violence exerted by a small number of men against a large number, has always had this effect, that the small number is armed, while the majority is unarmed, or that the small number is better armed than the majority.

Thus have things been done in the case of every con-

quest: thus have nations been vanquished by the Greeks, the Romans, the knights, a Cortes, and thus are people now vanquished in Africa and Asia, and thus do all the governments in time of peace hold their subjects in subjection.

As in antiquity, even so now, one set of men rules another, only because some are armed, while the others are not.

In ancient times the warriors with their leaders fell upon defenceless inhabitants and vanquished and plundered them, and all of them, according to the part they took, their bravery, their cruelty, divided up the booty, and it was obvious to every warrior that the violence practised by him was advantageous for him. But now the armed men, who are for the most part taken from among the working men, go against defenceless people, strikers, rioters, or inhabitants of foreign countries, and vanquish and plunder them (that is, compel them to give up their labour), not for themselves, but for those who do not even take part in the subjugation.

The only difference between conquerors and governments is this, that the conquerors with their warriors attacked defenceless inhabitants and, in case of their insubmission, carried out their threats of tortures and murders, while the governments, in case of insubmission, do not themselves practise tortures and murder on the defenceless inhabitants, but cause this to be done by deceived and specially bestialized men, who are taken from among the very masses which they oppress. Thus the former violence was practised through personal efforts, — through the bravery, cruelty, and agility of the conquerors themselves, while the present violence is practised through deception.

Therefore, if, to be freed from the violence of armed men, it was formerly necessary to arm oneself and to offer armed violence against armed violence, now, when

the masses are not vanquished through direct violence, but through deception, all that is needed for the destruction of the violence is the arraignment of the deception which makes it possible for a small number of men to exert violence against a larger number.

The deception through which this is accomplished consists in this, that the small number of ruling men, who have received their power from their predecessors, as established by the conquerors, say to the majority: "There are many of you, you are stupid and uneducated, and you are not able to govern yourselves, nor to arrange your own public affairs, and so we take this care upon ourselves: we will defend you against foreign enemies, will establish and maintain domestic order among yourselves, will judge among you, will establish and guard the public institutions for you,—the schools, roads of communication, posts,—and will in general care for your weal; for all that you shall fulfil the few demands which we will make upon you, among them also this, that you turn over into our control a small portion of your incomes and that you yourselves enter the army, which is necessary for your safety and for your government."

And the men of the majority agree to this, not because they have weighed the advantages or the disadvantages of these conditions (they never have a chance to do this), but because they find themselves under these conditions from the time of their birth. If doubts arise in these men as to the necessity of all that, every man, thinking of himself alone, is afraid to suffer in case of a refusal to fulfil these conditions, and hopes to make use of these conditions for his own advantage, and all men agree to this, assuming that the transference of a small portion of their possessions to the government, and their agreement to do military service, cannot injure their lives very much. But the moment the money and the soldiers are in the power of the governments, these, instead of fulfilling

the obligation taken upon themselves of defending their subjects against foreign enemies and establishing their prosperity, do everything they can to irritate the neighbouring nations and provoke wars, and not only fail to contribute to the domestic prosperity of their nations, but also ruin and corrupt them.

In *The Thousand and One Nights* there is a story about a traveller who, having been brought to an uninhabited island, finds an old man, with dried up legs, sitting on the ground, on the bank of a brook. The old man asks the traveller to take him on his shoulders and carry him across the brook. This the traveller agrees to do. But the moment the old man seats himself on his shoulders, he winds his legs tightly around the traveller's neck and does not let go of him. Having taken possession of the traveller, the old man orders him about as he pleases, plucks fruits from the trees, which he eats without giving anything to the one who carries him, and in every other way scorns the traveller.

The same is done to the nations which have given money and soldiers to the governments. With the money the governments buy guns and hire, or prepare through education, irresponsible, bestialized military chiefs. But the chiefs, by means of artful methods of stultification, worked out through the ages, which are called discipline, prepare a disciplined army out of the men who are taken into the army. This discipline consists in this, that the men who undergo the instruction and have followed it for a certain time are completely deprived of everything which is precious to a man,— of the chief human property — rational freedom,— and become submissive, machine-like implements of murder in the hands of their organized hieratic authorities.

There is good reason why the kings, emperors, and presidents esteem discipline so highly, fear so much the violation of it, and consider their most important business

to be inspections, manœuvres, parades, ceremonial marches, and similar foolish things. They know that all that maintains discipline, and on discipline alone is based, not only their power, but also their existence. The disciplined army is the means with which they can through other people's hands commit the greatest malefactions, and the ability to do so subjugates the peoples to them.

In this disciplined army lies the essence of the deception, in consequence of which the governments of modern times dominate the nations. When this unwilling implement of violence and murder is in the power of the government, the whole nation is in its power, and the government no longer lets go of it, and not only ruins it, but also scorns it, impressing it, by means of a pseudo-religious and patriotic education, with loyalty and even veneration for the government, that is, for those very men who keep the nation in slavery and torment it.

Consequently the only means for the destruction of the governments is not violence, but the arraignment of this deception; it is necessary for the people to understand that, in the first place, amidst the Christian world there is no need to defend the nations against one another, that all the hostilities between the nations are provoked only by the governments themselves, and the armies are needed only for a small number of ruling men, but are not needed by the nations, to which they are even extremely harmful, in that they serve as an implement for the enslavement of men; in the second place, it is necessary for men to understand that that discipline which is so highly esteemed by the governments is the greatest crime a man can commit, — an obvious proof of the criminality of the aims of the governments. Discipline is the destruction of reason and of liberty in man, and cannot have any other purpose than merely the preparation for the commission of such malefactions as not one man will commit in his normal condition. For a defensive national war it is

unnecessary, as has lately been proved by the Boer War. All that it is needed for, and for this chiefly, is, as determined by William II., to commit the greatest crimes,—fratricide and patricide.

In precisely the same manner acted the terrible old man who was sitting on the traveller's shoulders: he laughed at him, knowing that so long as he was sitting on his shoulders, the traveller was in his power.

It is this terrible deception, by means of which a small number of evil men, in the form of the governments, dominate the nations, and not only ruin them, but even commit the most injurious of all deeds, corrupting them for generations from their very childhood, which must be laid open, in order that the destruction of the governments and of the slavery resulting from them may be made possible.

The German writer, Eugen Schmitt, who edited in Budapest the newspaper *Ohne Staat*, printed in it an article, true and bold not only in expression, but also in thought, in which he said that the governments, in justifying their existence by saying that they provide for their subjects a certain amount of security, do not differ in this from a Calabrese bandit who imposes a tax upon all those who want to travel safely over the highways. Schmitt was tried for this, but the jury found him innocent.

We are so hypnotized by the governments that such a comparison seems to be an exaggeration, a paradox, a jest, whereas it is no paradox and no jest,—in fact, the comparison is incorrect, because the activity of all the governments is much more inhuman and, above all things, much more harmful than the activity of the Calabrese bandit. The bandit for the most part robs the rich, while the governments for the most part rob the poor, while they protect the rich, who help them in their crimes. The bandit, in doing what he does, risks his life, while the governments risk nothing and build all their deeds on lying and

deceit. The bandit does not forcibly take anybody into his band, while the governments draft their soldiers generally by force. With the bandit all those who pay the tribute receive equal security, while in the state a man receives the more security, and even reward, the more he takes part in the organized deception. Most secure is the emperor, king, or president (he is always surrounded by a guard of protection), and he spends the greatest amount of money, which is collected from the subjects who are burdened with taxes; then, in proportion with their greater or lesser participation in the governmental crimes, come the commanders-in-chief, ministers, chiefs of police, governors, and so on, down to the policemen, who are least protected and who receive the least salary. But he who does not at all take part in the governmental crimes, refusing to serve, to pay taxes, to have anything to do with the court, is subjected to violence, as one is subjected to it by the robbers. The bandit does not intentionally corrupt people, while the governments for the attainment of their purposes corrupt whole generations of children and adults by false religious and patriotic doctrines. Above all things, not one, the most cruel bandit, no Sténka Rázin, no Cartouche, can in cruelty, heartlessness, and refinement of tortures compare, not only with the sovereigns famous for their cruelty, John the Terrible, Louis XI., the Elizabeths, and so forth, but even with the present constitutional and liberal governments, with their solitary cells, disciplinary battalions, pacifications of riots, and slaughters in wars.

We must bear ourselves toward the governments as toward the churches, — either with awe, or with disgust. So long as a man has not come to understand what the government is, just as he does not understand what the church is, he cannot help but look with awe upon these institutions. So long as he is guided by them, he must, for the sake of his egoism, imagine that what he is

guided by is something original, great, and sacred; but the moment he has come to understand that what he is guided by is nothing original or sacred, and that it is only the deception of evil men who have used it, under the guise of guidance, for their personal purposes, he cannot help but immediately experience disgust for these men, which is the greater, the more important the side of life is in which he was guided.

It is this that men must feel in relation to the governments, if they have come to understand their meaning.

People must understand that their participation in the criminal activity of the governments, whether by giving up part of their labours, in the form of money, or by a direct participation in military service, is not an indifferent act, such as people generally take it to be, but, besides the harm done to him and to his brothers by this act, also a participation in the crimes which are incessantly committed by all the governments, and a preparation for new crimes, for which the governments are always ready, when they maintain a disciplined army.

The time for a relation of awe to the governments, in spite of the whole hypnotization which the governments employ for the maintenance of their position, is passing more and more. And it is time for men to understand that the governments are not only useless, but also injurious and in the highest degree immoral institutions, in which an honest and self-respecting man cannot and must not take part, and the advantages of which he cannot and must not enjoy.

As soon as men shall come to understand this, they will naturally stop taking part in those acts, that is, giving the governments soldiers and money. As soon as the majority of men shall stop doing that, the deception which enslaves men will destroy itself.

Only in this way can men be freed from slavery.



## 15

"But these are all general reflections; whether they be just or unjust, they are inapplicable to life," I hear the objections of people who are accustomed to their position and who do not consider it possible or desirable to change it.

"Tell me, what is actually to be done? How is society to be built up?" generally say the men of the well-to-do classes.

The men of the well-to-do classes are so much used to their rôle of slave-owners that, when the amelioration of the working men's condition is under discussion, they, feeling themselves in the position of the landed proprietors, immediately begin to discuss all kinds of projects for the management of their slaves, but it does not even occur to them that they have no right whatever to dispose of other men, and that, if they really mean to do good to men, the one thing they can and must do is to stop doing the evil which they are doing now. The evil which they are doing is very definite and clear. The evil which they are doing is not only this, that they are using the compulsory labour of slaves and do not wish to renounce this exploitation, but also this, that they are themselves taking part in the establishment and maintenance of this compulsory labour. It is this that they must stop doing.

But the working people are so corrupted by the compulsory slavery that to the majority of them it appears that, if their condition is bad, the fault is with their masters, who pay them too little and own the implements of production; it does not even occur to them that their bad condition is due to themselves alone, and that, if they actually desire the amelioration of their condition and of that of their brothers, and not each his own advantage, the chief thing they should do is to stop doing evil. But the evil which they do consists in this, that, wishing

to improve their material condition by those very means by which they are brought into slavery, the working men, to be able to gratify those habits which they have acquired, sacrifice their human dignity and liberty and accept degrading, immoral positions, or work at producing useless and injurious articles; but chiefly in this, that they support the governments, take part in them with their taxes and direct service, and thus enslave themselves.

For men's condition to improve, both the men of the well-do-men classes and the labourers must understand that it is impossible to improve men's condition by preserving their own advantage, that the ministration to men is not without sacrifices, and that therefore, if people really want to improve the condition of their brothers, and not their own, they must be prepared, not only for the change of the whole structure of life to which they are used, and to the loss of those advantages which they have been enjoying, but also for a tense struggle, not with the governments, but with themselves and their families,—they must be prepared for persecutions for not fulfilling the demands of the government.

Consequently the answer to the question as to what should be done is very simple, and not only definite, but also in the highest degree and always and for every man practicable and easy of execution, though it is not such as is expected by those who, like the men of the well-to-do classes, are fully convinced that they are called, not to mend themselves (they are good as it is), but to teach others and provide for them, or who, like the working people, are convinced that it is not they who are to blame for their bad condition, but only the capitalists, and that this condition can be changed only by taking away from the capitalists what they enjoy, and by making it possible for all men to enjoy those pleasures of life which the capitalists alone enjoy at present. This answer is quite definite, practicable, and easy of execution, because it

invites to activity the only person over whom each has a real, legal, and undoubted power, — oneself, — and consists in this, that, if a man — be he slave or slaveholder — really wishes to improve, not his condition alone, but the condition of all men, he must himself stop doing the evil which produces his slavery and the slavery of his brothers. And, in order not to do the evil which produces his wretchedness and the wretchedness of his brothers, he must, in the first place, neither voluntarily nor by compulsion take part in governmental activities, and so not take upon himself the calling of a soldier, or field-marshal, or minister, or collector of taxes, or deputy, or elder, or juror, or governor, or member of parliament, or in general any office which is connected with violence. So much for one thing. In the second place, such a man must not voluntarily pay any direct or indirect taxes to the government, and must equally not make use of any money which is collected as taxes, either in the form of a salary or in the form of pensions, or rewards, and so forth, nor make use of any governmental institutions which are supported from the taxes that are forcibly collected from the people. So much for the second thing. In the third place, a man who wishes to contribute, not to his own welfare alone, but to the amelioration of men's condition, must not turn to the governmental violence, either for the protection of the ownership of land or other objects, or for his own security or the security of his friends, but must own the land, as well as all other products of other people's or his own labour, only to the extent to which no demands of other people are brought forward in regard to these articles.

“But such an activity is impossible: to refuse every participation in governmental affairs means to renounce life,” I shall be told. “A man who will refuse to do military service will be imprisoned; a man who will not pay his taxes will be subjected to penalties, and the taxes

will be levied on his property ; a man who will refuse to enter the service of the government, without having any other means of existence, will perish with his family from hunger ; the same thing will happen to a man who will refuse the governmental protection of his property and person ; and it is quite impossible not to use articles that are burdened with taxes and not to use the governmental institutions, since often it is articles of prime necessity that are taxed, and it is similarly impossible to get along without the governmental institutions, such as the post-office, roads, and so forth.

It is quite true that it is hard for a man of our time to renounce every participation in governmental violence ; but the fact that not every man is able so to arrange his life as not to be in some measure a participant in governmental violence does not by any means show that there is no possibility of freeing oneself more and more from it. Not every man will have the strength to refuse to do military service (but there are and will be such), but it is in the power of every man not of his own free will to enter military, police, judicial, or fiscal service, and it is possible for him to prefer a less paying private activity to the more profitable governmental service.

Not every man will have the strength to renounce his ownership of land (though there are some men who do so), but it is possible for every man, if he understands the criminality of such property, to contract its limits. Not every man will be able to renounce the possession of capital (there are men who do) and the use of articles protected by violence, but it is possible for every man, diminishing his needs, to make less and less use of articles which provoke the envy of other people. Not every person is able to give up a governmental salary (there are also those who prefer starving to a dishonest governmental position), but it is possible for every man to prefer a small salary to a larger one, if only the duties

to be performed are less connected with violence. Not every person can renounce the use of the governmental schools (there are also those who do), but it is possible for every man to prefer a private school to one by the government. And so it is possible for every man less and less to use articles that are burdened with duties, and the institutions of the government.

Between the existing order of things, which is based on coarse violence, and the ideal of life, which consists in a communion of men that is based on rational consent as established by custom, there is an endless number of steps over which humanity has walked incessantly, and the approach to this ideal is accomplished only in proportion as men are freed from participation in violence, from using it, and from the habit of it. We do not know and we cannot foresee, much less prescribe, as the so-called learned men do, in what way is to come about this gradual weakening of the governments and the emancipation of men from them; we do not even know what forms human life will assume as it is gradually emancipated from governmental violence; but we know indubitably that the life of men, who, having come to understand the criminality and harmfulness of the government's activity, will try not to make use of it and not to take part in it, will be a very different one and more in agreement with legitimate life and with our conscience than is the present one, when the men themselves, taking part in the violence of the governments and making use of it, pretend to be struggling against it and try to destroy the old violence by a new form of it.

Above all else, the present structure of life is bad; all men agree to that. The cause of the bad condition and of the slavery lies in the violence of the governments. To destroy the governmental violence there exists but one means: people's refusal to take part in violence. Consequently, whether it is hard for people to refrain from par-

ticipation in governmental violence, or not, and whether the beneficent results of such a refusal will appear soon, or not,—such questions are superfluous, because there is but this one means, and no other, for freeing men from slavery.

But to what extent and when the substitution of rational and free consent, sanctioned by custom, for violence will be realized in every society and in the whole world, that will depend on the strength of the lucidity of people's consciences and on the number of separate individuals who have attained to such a state of conscience. Every one of us is an individual, and every one of us may be a participant in the common movement of humanity by a more or less clear consciousness or beneficent purpose, and he may be an opponent to this movement. Every man has the choice, either to go against God's will, by building on the sand the frail house of his perishable deceptive life, or to join the eternal, undying movement of the true life according to God's will.

But, maybe, I am mistaken, and it is necessary to make quite different deductions from the history of humanity, and humanity does not march from violence to emancipation, and, maybe, it is possible to prove that violence is a necessary factor of progress, that the state with its violence is an indispensable form of life, and that men will be worse off, if governments, property, and the protection of security are done away with.

Let us admit that that is so and that all the preceding arguments are wrong; but, besides the general considerations about the life of humanity, every man has also the question of his personal life, and, in spite of all reflections concerning the general laws of life, a man cannot do what he recognizes not only as injurious, but also as bad.

“It is very likely that the reflection that the state is a necessary form of the development of personality and that governmental violence is indispensable for the good of

society may be deduced from history, and that these reflections are right," every sincere and honest man of our time will answer. "But murder is evil,—that I know more certainly than all reflections; but, by demanding of me military service or money for the hire and arming of soldiers, or for the purchase of cannon and the armament of ironclads, you wish to make me a participant in murder, and I not only do not want that, but am not even able to do that. Even so I will not and cannot use the money which you have collected from the hungry under threat of murder, and I will not make use of the land and of the capital which you protect, because I know that you protect only by means of murder.

"I was able to do all that so long as I did not understand the whole criminality of these matters; but the moment I came to see it I was unable to stop seeing it, and I am no longer able to take part in these things.

"I know that we are all so bound up by violence that it is hard fully to vanquish it, but I will none the less do what I can in order not to take part in it, I will not be its accomplice, and I will try not to use what is acquired and protected by murder.

"I have one life, and why should I in this my brief life act contrary to the voice of my conscience and become a participant in your abominable deeds? I will not do so.

"What will come of all that? I do not know; but I think that nothing bad can happen from my acting as my conscience commands me to act."

Thus must every honest and sincere man of our time retort to all the arguments about the indispensableness of governments and violence, and to every demand or invitation to take part in it.

Thus the highest judge, from whom there is no appeal,—the voice of conscience,—confirms for every man what he is led to by general considerations.

## EPILOGUE

"WHY, that is again the old sermon: on the one hand, about the destruction of the existing order without the substitution of another for it, and on the other, about non-acting," many will say, upon reading the above. "The governmental activity is not good, and likewise the activity of the landowner or enterprising man is not good; similarly bad is the activity of the socialists and anarchistic revolutionaries, that is, every practical activity, and what is good is some kind of a moral, spiritual, indefinite activity, which reduces itself to absolute chaos and non-acting." Thus, I know, many serious and sincere men will think and say.

What to men appears most confounding, in the absence of violence, is the unprotected condition of property, and so the chance offered for every man to take with impunity from another what he needs or wants. People who are accustomed to the protection of property and the person by means of violence imagine that without this protection there will be a constant disorder, a constant struggle of all against all.

I will not repeat what I have said in another place about this, that the protection of property by means of violence does not diminish, but increases disorder. But even if we admit that with the absence of protection there may arise disorders, what are people to do who have come to understand the cause of those calamities from which they suffer?

If we understand that we are sick from intoxication, we



cannot continue drinking and hope to improve our condition by drinking moderately, or continue drinking and take medicine which is prescribed to us by short-sighted physicians.

The same is true of the disease of society. If we have come to understand that one set of people does violence to other people, it is impossible to improve the condition of society by continuing to maintain the governmental violence which exists, or by introducing a new, the revolutionary, socialistic violence. That was possible so long as the fundamental cause of men's calamities was not clearly discernible. But as soon as it becomes indubitably clear that men suffer from violence which is exerted by one class of men over another, it is no longer possible to improve the condition of men by continuing the old and introducing the new kind of violence. Just as for an alcoholic patient there is but one means for his liberation, — abstinence from liquor, the cause of the disease, — so there is but one means for the liberation of men from the bad structure of society, and that is, abstinence from violence, — the cause of calamities, — from personal violence, from the propaganda of violence, from every justification of violence.

Not only is this the only means for freeing men from their wretchedness, but its application is also necessary, because it coincides with the moral law of every separate individual of our time. If a man of our time has come to understand that every protection of property and personality by means of violence is attained only by the threat of killing and by killing itself, he can no longer calmly use what is acquired through murder or the threat of killing, much less can he take part in murder or the threat of killing. Thus, what is demanded for the liberation of men from their calamities is also necessary for the gratification of the moral feeling of every individual. And so there can no longer be any doubt for every sepa-

rate individual that both for the common good and for the fulfilment of the law of his life he must not take part in violence, must not justify it, must not make use of it.

# WHAT IS RELIGION

And in What Does Its Essence Consist?

1902



# WHAT IS RELIGION ?

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## 1

IN all human societies there always, at certain periods of their life, arrives a time when religion at first deflects from its fundamental meaning, then, deflecting more and more, loses its fundamental meaning and finally congeals in once for all established forms, and then its action upon the lives of men grows constantly less and less.

During such periods the cultured minority, not believing in the existing religious teaching, only pretends to be believing in it, as it finds this necessary in order to retain the popular masses in the established structure of life ; but the popular masses, though through inertia abiding in the once established forms of religion, in their lives are no longer guided by the demands of religion, but only by the popular customs and state laws.

Thus it has been many times in various human societies, but there has never before happened what now is going on in our Christian society. It never happened before that the rich, ruling, and most cultured minority, which has the greatest influence upon the masses, should not believe in the existing religion, but should be convinced that in our time no religion is needed, and should impress upon the people who doubt in the truth of the professed religion, not some more rational and clearer religious doctrine than the existing one, but the fact that

religion has in general outlived its time and is now not only a useless, but also a harmful organ of the life of societies, something like the blind gut in man's organism. Religion is studied by these men, not as something known to us through our inner experience, but as an external phenomenon, like a disease, to which some people are subject and which can be investigated only from its external symptoms.

Religion, according to the opinion of some of these men, originated in the spiritualization of all the phenomena of Nature (animism); according to others, in the conception of the possibility of establishing a relation with the deceased ancestors; according to others again, in the fear of the forces of Nature. And since, the learned men of our time continue to reason, science has proved that trees and stones cannot be vitalized, and the deceased ancestors no longer feel what the living are doing, and the phenomena of Nature are explained according to natural causes, there has also been destroyed the necessity of religion and of all those restrictions which, in consequence of religious beliefs, people have imposed upon themselves. According to the opinion of the learned there was a period of ignorance,—of religion. This period was long ago outlived by humanity, and only rare, atavistic signs of it are left. Then followed the metaphysical period, and that too has been outlived. But now we, the enlightened men, are living in the scientific period, in the period of positive science, which takes the place of religion and leads humanity to a high stage of development, such as it could never have reached by submitting to superstitious religious doctrines.

In the beginning of 1901 the famous French scholar, Berthelot, delivered a speech (*Revue de Paris*, Janvier, 1901) in which he informed his hearers that the time of religion was past, and that religion must now give way to science. I quote this speech, because it is the first

which fell into my hands and because it was delivered in the capital of the cultured world by a well-recognized scholar ; but the same idea is constantly expressed everywhere, beginning with philosophic treatises and ending with newspaper feuilletons. M. Berthelot says in this speech that formerly there were two principles which moved humanity : force and religion. Now these movers have become superfluous, because science has taken their place. By science M. Berthelot, like all men who believe in science, apparently understands such science as embraces the whole field of human knowledge, harmoniously connected and distributed according to the degree of its importance, and is in possession of such methods that all the data acquired by it form an unquestionable truth. But since such a science does not exist in reality, while what is called science forms a conglomerate of accidental, disconnected bits of knowledge, which frequently are useless and not only do not represent an undoubted truth, but are filled through and through with the grossest delusions, which to-day are put forth as truths and to-morrow are overthrown, it is evident that there does not exist the very subject which, according to M. Berthelot's opinion, is to take the place of religion. Consequently the assertion of M. Berthelot and of the people who agree with him, that science will take the place of religion, is quite arbitrary, and is based on an ungrounded faith in the infallible science, which completely resembles the faith in the infallible church. Meanwhile, the people who call themselves and are called learned are absolutely convinced that such a science already exists, and that it must and can take the place of religion, and has even now overthrown it.

“ Religion has outlived its usefulness, and it is a sign of ignorance to believe in anything but science. Science will arrange everything needed, and we should be guided in life by nothing but science,” think and say both the

learned and the people of the crowd, who, though far removed from science, believe in the learned and with them assert that religion is an obsolete superstition, and that in life we should be guided by science, that is, in reality by nothing, since science, from its very aim, — to study everything in existence, — is unable to give any guidance in the life of man.

## 2

The learned men of our time have decided that religion is not necessary, that science will take its place, or has already taken its place, and yet, as before so also now, no human society, no rational man, has lived, or can live, without religion (I say "rational man," because an irrational man, like an animal, can live without religion). A rational man cannot live without religion, because it is only religion that gives a rational man the necessary guidance as to what he should do, and what he should do first and what next. A rational man cannot live without religion, even because reason is the property of his nature. Every animal is guided in its acts — except those toward which it is driven by the direct necessity of gratifying its wishes — by considerations about the nearest consequences of its acts. Having reflected upon these consequences by means of that power of cognition which it possesses, the animal harmonizes its acts with these consequences and always without wavering acts in the self-same manner, in correspondence with these considerations. Thus, for example, a bee flies after the honey and brings it into the hive, because in the winter it will need the food collected for itself and for its young ones, and outside of these considerations it does not know and cannot know anything; even so acts a bird in weaving its nest and in flying from north to south and back again. Even so acts every animal in performing an act which does not result



from the direct, present necessity, but which is conditioned by considerations of expected consequences. But it is not thus with man.

The difference between a man and an animal is this, that the animal's faculties of cognition are limited by what we call instinct, while man's fundamental faculty of cognition is reason. The bee, in collecting the food, can have no doubts as to whether it is good or bad to collect it. But a man, in collecting the harvest or fruit, cannot help but think as to whether he is destroying for the future time the production of the corn or the fruit and whether by his harvesting he is depriving his neighbours of food. And he cannot help but think as to what will become of his children whom he feeds, and many more things. The most important questions of the conduct of life cannot by a rational man be determined definitely for the very abundance of consequences, which he cannot help but see. Every rational man feels, if he does not know, that in the most important questions of life he must not be guided by his personal impulses, or by considerations as to the immediate consequences of his activity, because he sees too many various and frequently contradictory consequences, that is, such as with equal probability may be beneficent or injurious, both for him and for other people. There is a legend as to how an angel, who descended upon earth into the house of a God-fearing family, killed the child in the cradle, and, when he was asked why he did that, replied that the child would have grown to be a great malefactor and would have caused the family a misfortune. Not only the question as to what human life is useful, useless, or harmful, but also all the most important questions of life cannot be solved by a rational man from a consideration of their nearest relations and consequences. A rational man cannot be satisfied with those considerations which guide the acts of an animal. A man may consider himself as an animal

amidst animals who live in the present day, and he can consider himself as a member of his family and as a member of society, a nation, which lives by centuries, and he can and by all means must (since his reason irrepressibly draws him to it) consider himself as a part of the whole endless universe, which lives an infinite time. And thus a rational man has always been obliged in relation to the infinitely small phenomena of life which may influence his acts to make, and always has made, what in mathematics is called integration, that is, to establish, besides his relation to the nearest phenomena of life, his relation to the whole universe, infinite in time and space, by comprehending life as one whole. Such an establishment of man's relation to the whole, of which he feels himself to be a part and from which he deduces guidance in his actions, is what has been called religion. Therefore religion has always been and always must be a necessity and an irremovable condition of the life of a rational man and of rational humanity.

## 3

Thus has religion always been understood by men who are not deprived of the faculty of the higher, that is, the religious, consciousness, which distinguishes man from the animal. The oldest and most customary definition of religion, from which also comes the word "religion" itself (*religare*, to bind), consists in this, that religion is man's union with God. "*Les obligations de l'homme envers Dieu, voilà la religion*," says Vauvenargue. A similar meaning is ascribed to religion by Schleiermacher and Feuerbach, who recognize as the basis of religion man's consciousness of his dependence on God. "*La religion est une affaire entre chaque homme et Dieu*" (Beile). "*La religion est le résultat des besoins de l'âme et des effets de l'intelligence*" (B. Constant). "Religion is a certain method for man to

realize his relation to the superhuman and mysterious forces on which he considers himself to be dependent" (Goblet d'Alviella). "Religion is the definition of human life by means of the connection between the human soul and that mysterious spirit whose government of the world and of himself is recognized by man and with whom he feels himself to be bound up" (A. Reville).

Thus the essence of religion has always been understood by men who are not deprived of the highest human quality to be the establishment by man of his relation to the infinite being or beings whose power he feels over himself. And this relation, no matter how it may differ for the different peoples and at different times, has always determined for men their destiny in the universe, from which naturally has resulted the guidance for their activity. A Jew understood his relation to the Infinite to be this, that he was a member of a nation chosen by God from among all the nations and so had to observe before God the covenant entered into with this nation by God. A Greek understood his relation to be this, that he, being related to the representatives of infinitude—the gods, must do what was pleasing to them. A Brahmin understood his relation to the infinite Brahma to be this, that he was a manifestation of this Brahma and must through a renunciation of life strive for a union with this supreme being. A Buddhist understands his relation to the Infinite to be this, that he, passing from one form of life to another, inevitably suffers, and that the sufferings are due to passions and desires, and that, therefore, he must strive for an annihilation of all passions and desires and for a transition into Nirvana. Every religion is the establishment of man's relation to the infinite existence to which he feels himself related and from which he deduces his rules of action. And so, if a religion does not establish man's relation to the Infinite, as, for example, is the case in idolatry and sorcery, it is not a religion, but only a

degeneration of it. If a religion, though establishing man's relation to God, establishes it by means of assertions which are contrary to reason and contemporary knowledge, so that a man cannot believe in these assertions, this is again not religion, but only its semblance. If a religion does not bind up man's life with the infinite existence, this is again not a religion. Nor is that a religion which demands faith in propositions from which no definite direction for man's activity results.

True religion is man's relation to the infinite life about him, as established by him, a relation which is concordant with reason and human knowledge and binds his life up with this Infinity and governs his acts.

## 4

The learned men of our time, though nowhere and at no time men have lived without religion, say, like that physician against his will in Molière's comedy, who insisted that the liver was in the left side, "*Nous avons changé tout cela*," and that we can and must live without religion. But religion, as it has been, so it remains the chief mover, the heart of the life of human societies, and without it, as without the heart, there can be no rational life. There has always been a great variety of religions, because the expression of man's relation to the Infinite, to God or the gods, differs in time and according to the degree of the development of the various nations, but never has any society of men, from the time that men have been rational beings, been able to live without religion, and never has any lived without it.

It is true, there have been periods in the life of nations when the existing religion was so corrupted and so far removed from life that it no longer governed it. But this interruption in the action of religion upon the lives of men, which arrives for every religion at a certain time,

has been only temporary. Religion, like everything living, has the property of being born, developing, aging, dying, again being born and always reborn in a more perfect form than before. After a period of the highest development of religion there always arrives a period of its weakening and stagnation, after which generally follows a period of regeneration and of the establishment of a more rational and lucid religious teaching than the former. Such periods of development, stagnation, and regeneration have existed in all religions: in the profound Brahmin religion, in which, as soon as it began to age and petrify in once established gross forms that deflected it from its fundamental meaning, there appeared, on the one hand, the regeneration of Brahminism, and, on the other, the advanced teaching of Buddhism, which greatly promoted humanity's conception of its relation to the Infinite. A similar decadence happened in the Greek and the Roman religions, and in a similar way, after the decadence had reached the highest point, there appeared Christianity. The same happened with the ecclesiastic Christianity, which in Byzantium degenerated into idolatry and polytheism, when, to counterbalance the corrupt Christianity, there appeared, on the one hand, Paulicianism, and, on the other, in opposition to the doctrine about the Trinity and the Holy Virgin, strict Mohammedanism, with its fundamental dogma of the one God. The same thing happened with Popish Christianity in the Middle Ages, when it called the Reformation into life. Thus the periods when religions weaken, as regards their effect upon the majority of men, are an indispensable condition of the life and the development of all religious teachings. This is due to the fact that every religious teaching in its true sense, no matter how gross it may be, always establishes man's relation to the Infinite, which is the same for all men. Every religion recognizes man as equally insignificant in the presence of the Infinite, and

so every religion always includes the conception of the equality of all men before what it considers to be God, be it the lightning, the wind, a tree, an animal, a hero, a deceased or living king, as was the case in Rome. Thus the recognition of the equality of men is an inevitable, fundamental property of every religion. But since in reality there has nowhere and at no time existed any equality among men, the moment there appeared such a new religious teaching, which always includes the recognition of the equality of all men, those men for whom the inequality was advantageous immediately set out to conceal this fundamental property of the religious teaching, by distorting the religious teaching itself. This has been done wherever a new religious teaching has made its appearance. And this has generally happened unconsciously, merely in consequence of the fact that the men for whom the inequality was advantageous, the ruling men, the rich, in order to feel themselves right in the face of the newly accepted teaching, without changing their own condition, tried in every way to ascribe to the religious teaching a meaning with which the inequality would be possible. But the distorted religion, which made it possible for those who ruled others to consider themselves right, was naturally transmitted to the masses whom it impressed with the idea that their submission to the ruling people was a demand of the religion professed by them.

## 5

Every human activity is evoked by three impelling causes, by feeling, by reason, and by suggestion, by that property which the physicians call hypnosis. At times a man acts only under the influence of feeling, striving to obtain what he wishes ; at other times he acts under the influence of reason alone, which points out to him what he ought to do ; at other times again, and this most

frequently, man acts because he has suggested to himself and has had suggested to him by others a certain action and he unconsciously submits to this suggestion. Under normal conditions of life all three factors take part in man's activity. Feeling draws man toward a certain action, reason verifies the conformity of this action with what surrounds it, with the past and the assumed future, and suggestion compels man, without feeling or thinking, to commit acts that are evoked by feeling and approved by reason. If there were no feeling, a man would not undertake anything; if there were no reason, a man would at once abandon himself to many contradictory feelings, which would be harmful both to him and to others; if there were no property of submitting to one's own suggestion and to the suggestion of others, a man would be obliged without cessation to experience the feeling which has impelled him to a certain course of actions, and constantly to strain his reason for the verification of the correctness of his feeling. For this reason all three factors are necessary for the simplest human activity. When a man walks from one place to another, this is due to the fact that his feeling has impelled him to go from one place to another, his reason has approved of this intention and has prescribed the means of execution (in the given case the walking along a certain path), and the muscles of the body obey, and the man marches in the direction prescribed. During the time that he is walking his feeling and reason are set free for another activity, which could not be, if there did not exist the possibility of submitting to suggestion. This is what takes place in all human activities as well as in the chief activity, the religious. Feeling evokes the necessity of establishing man's relation to God; reason defines this relation; suggestion impels man to act in accordance with this relation. This is true only so long as religion is not subject to distortion. The moment this distortion

begins, suggestion becomes stronger and stronger, and the activity of feeling and reason grows weaker. The means of suggestion are always and everywhere the same. These means consist in making use of that condition of man when he is most receptive for suggestion (childhood, important events in life, — death, birth, marriage), and in affecting him through productions of art, — architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dramatic performances, — and in this condition of susceptibility, which resembles the one obtained over separate persons in a state of half-sleep, in suggesting to him what is desired by the suggesters.

This phenomenon may be observed in the case of all the ancient creeds: in the exalted teaching of the Brahmins, which degenerated into a coarse worship of numberless representations in various temples, with the accompaniment of singing and incense; in the ancient Jewish religion, which was preached by the prophets and which changed into the worship of God in a magnificent temple, with solemn songs and processions; in exalted Buddhism, which, with its monasteries and representations of Buddha, and its endless solemn rites, has changed into the mysterious Lamaism; in Taoism, with its sorcery and incantations.

In all religious teachings, when they are on the point of becoming corrupt, their guardians of the religious teachings have always employed every effort in bringing men into a condition of a weakened activity of reason, and in suggesting to them what they themselves want. What it has been necessary to suggest in all religions has been the same three propositions which serve as the foundation of all those distortions to which the aging religions have been subjected: in the first place, that there is a special kind of men who alone can be the mediators between man and God or the gods; in the second place, that miracles have taken place and that these prove and



confirm the authenticity of what the mediators between man and God say ; and, in the third place, that there are certain words, which are repeated by word of mouth or are written down in books, and which express the invariable will of God or the gods, and so are sacred and infallible. The moment these propositions are accepted under the influence of the hypnosis, everything else which the mediators between God and men may say is accepted as the holy truth, and the chief aim of the distortion of religion is attained, that is, not only the concealment of the law of the equality of men, but also the establishment and confirmation of the highest inequality, the division into castes, the separation into men and "goys," into orthodox and infidel, into saints and sinners. This very thing has also happened in Christianity : there was recognized the absolute inequality of men among themselves, who as regards the comprehensions of the teaching were divided into clergy and laity, and as regards the social position were divided into men who had the power and those who must submit to them,—and this inequality according to Paul's doctrine is recognized as established by God himself.

## 6

The inequality of men, not only of the clergy and the laity, but also of the rich and the poor, masters and slaves, was established in the ecclesiastic Christian religion in just as definite and glaring a form as in the other religions. And yet, to judge from the data which we have concerning the primitive condition of Christianity, according to the teaching expressed in the gospels, it seems, all the chief methods of distortion practised in the other religions were foreseen, and a warning against them is clearly expressed. In relation to the class of the priests it says directly that no man can be the teacher of another (do not call yourselves fathers and teachers);

in relation to ascribing a sacred significance to books it says that what is important is the spirit, and not the letter, and that men must not believe in the traditions of men, and that the whole law and the prophets, that is, all the books which were regarded as sacred writings, reduce themselves only to this, that we should do to our neighbours as we wish that our neighbours should do to us. If nothing is said against miracles, and miracles are described in the Gospel as having been practised by Jesus, it is none the less to be seen from the whole spirit of the teaching that the truth of Jesus' teaching is not based on the miracles, but on the teaching itself. ("He who wants to know whether my teaching be true, let him do as I do.") Above all things, the equality of all men was proclaimed by Christianity, not as a deduction from men's relation to the Infinite, but as a fundamental teaching of the brotherhood of all men, since all men are recognized to be sons of God. For this reason, it would seem, it was impossible so to distort Christianity as to destroy the recognition of the equality of men among themselves.

But the human mind is inventive, and an entirely new means ("*truc*," as the French say) was thought out, maybe unconsciously or semiconsciously, for making the Gospel warning and the obvious proclamation of the equality of all men ineffective. This "*truc*" consists in ascribing an infallibility, not only to a certain letter, but also to a certain assembly of men, called the church, which has the right to transmit this infallibility to men chosen by them.

A short addition was invented for the Gospels, which was, that Christ, in ascending to heaven, transmitted to certain men the exclusive right, not only to teach men the divine truth (according to the letter of the Gospel verse He also transmitted the right to be immune against serpents, scorpions, and fire, though this right is generally not made use of), but also to make men saved or

unsaved, and, above all else, to transmit this right to other men. As soon as the concept of the church was firmly established, all the Gospel tenets which interfered with the distortion became inactive, because the church was superior to reason and to the Scriptures, which were considered to be sacred. Reason was recognized to be the source of error, and the Gospel was not interpreted as was demanded by common sense, but as was wanted by those who composed the church.

Thus the previous three methods of the distortion of the religions, priesthood, miracles, and the infallibility of the Scriptures, were recognized and in full force in Christianity, as elsewhere. The legitimacy of the existence of mediators between God and men was recognized, because the necessity and the legitimacy of the mediators was recognized by the church ; the reality of miracles was recognized, because the infallible church bore witness to it ; the Bible was recognized as being holy, because the church so recognized it.

Christianity was corrupted like all the other religions, but with this difference that, for the very reason that Christianity with peculiar clearness proclaimed the fundamental proposition about the equality of all men, as sons of God, it was necessary to make a particular effort to distort this teaching, in order to conceal its fundamental proposition. This was done with the aid of the concept of the church, and it was done to an extent to which it was not carried in any other religious teaching. Indeed, never has any religion preached propositions so discordant with reason and with the contemporary knowledge of men and so immoral, as those which are preached by the ecclesiastic Christianity. To say nothing of all the insipidities of the Old Testament, such as the creation of light before the sun, the creation of the world six thousand years ago, the putting of all the animals in an ark, and of all kinds of immoral abominations, such as the

slaying of children and of whole settlements by the command of God ; to say nothing of that stupid sacrament, about which Voltaire said that there exist all kinds of stupid religious doctrines, but that there never existed one, in which the chief religious act consists in eating one's own God, — what can be more senseless than that the Mother of God is both a mother and a virgin, that the heaven opened and a voice was heard from it, that Christ flew to heaven and there sits somewhere on the right of the Father, or that God is one and three, not three gods, like Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, but one and at the same time three ? And what can be more immoral than that terrible teaching according to which God, being evil and revengeful, punishes all men for Adam's sin, and for their salvation sends His son down upon earth, knowing in advance that the men will kill Him and will be cursed for that ; and this, that the salvation of men from sin consists in being christened or in believing that all that actually happened thus and that the Son of God was killed by men for the salvation of men, and that those who do not believe this will be punished by Him with eternal torments ? Thus, to say nothing of what is considered by some to be an addition to the chief dogmas of this religion, such as all the beliefs in all kinds of relics, the images of all kinds of Holy Virgins, the supplications directed to all kinds of saints, according to their specialties ; to say nothing of the Protestants' doctrine about predetermination, — the universally recognized foundations of this religion, as established by the Nicene symbol, are so stupid and immoral, and are carried to such a contradiction to sound human feeling and reason, that people cannot believe in them. Men may with their lips repeat certain words, but they cannot believe in what makes no sense. It is possible to say with our lips, "I believe in this, that the world was created six thousand years ago," or to say, "I believe that Christ flew to heaven and

is sitting on the right of the Father, or that God is one and at the same time three ;" but no one is able to believe in all that, because these words make no sense. And so the men of our world, who profess the distorted Christianity, in reality do not believe in anything. In this does the peculiarity of our time consist.

## 7

The men of our time do not believe in anything, and yet, according to that false definition of faith which they take from the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is incorrectly ascribed to Paul, they imagine that they have a faith. Faith, according to this definition, is the realization (*ὑπόστασις*) of things hoped for and the assurance (*ἔλεγχος*) of things unseen. But, to say nothing of this, that faith cannot be the realization of things hoped for, since faith is a spiritual condition, while the realization of things hoped for is an external event, faith is as little the assurance of things unseen, since this assurance, as it says in the further elucidation, is based on trust in the testimony of truth, whereas trust and faith are two different concepts. Faith is not hope and not trust, but a special spiritual condition. Faith is man's recognition of his position in the world, such as obliges him to commit certain acts. A man acts in accordance with his faith, not because, as it says in the catechism, he believes in the things unseen, but only because, having determined his position in the world, he naturally acts in correspondence with this position. Thus an agriculturist works the land and a navigator navigates the seas, not because, as it says in the catechism, either of them believes in the unseen, or because he hopes to get a reward for his activity (this hope exists, but it does not guide him), but because he considers his activity to be his calling. Even so a religious man acts in a certain manner, not because he believes

in the invisible or expects a reward for his activity, but because, having come to understand his position in the world, he naturally acts in conformity with this position. If a man has determined his position in society by being a labourer, or an artisan, or an official, or a merchant, he considers it necessary to work, and he works as a labourer, an artisan, an official, or a merchant. Even so a man in general, having in one way or another defined his position in the world, inevitably and naturally acts in conformity with this definition (sometimes not even with this definition, but with a dim consciousness). Thus, for example, a man, having determined his position in the world by assuming that he is a member of God's chosen nation, who, to enjoy God's protection, must fulfil the demands of this God, will live in such a way as to fulfil these demands ; while another man, having determined his position by assuming that he has been passing through various forms of existence and that his better or worse future will depend on his acts, will in his life be guided by this determination ; and a third man, who has determined his position by assuming that he is a fortuitous combination of atoms, in which the fire has been temporarily kindled, and that this fire will be destroyed for ever, will act differently from the first two.

The conduct of these men will be quite different, because they have variously defined their positions, that is, because they believe differently. Faith is the same as religion, with this difference, that by the word "religion" we mean the phenomenon perceived externally, while by "faith" we mean the same phenomenon as experienced inwardly by man. Faith is man's cognized relation to the infinite world, from which results the direction of his activity. Consequently true faith is never irrational, or discordant with the existing knowledge, and its property cannot consist in supernaturalness and senselessness, as some think and as was expressed by a father of the

church, "*Credo quia absurdum.*" On the contrary, the assertions of true faith, though they cannot be proved, not only never contain anything contrary to reason and discordant with men's knowledge, but always elucidate what in life without the propositions of faith presents itself as irrational and contradictory.

Thus, for example, an ancient Jew, who believed that there was a supreme, eternal, almighty being who created the world, the earth, the animals, and man, and so forth, and would protect his nation, if the nation would fulfil his law, did not believe in something irrational and discordant with his knowledge, but, on the contrary, this belief explained to him many otherwise inexplicable phenomena of life.

Similarly a Hindoo, who believes that our souls were in animals and that, according to our good or bad life, they will pass into higher or lower animals, by means of this faith explains to himself many phenomena which without it are inexplicable to him. The same is true of a man who regards life as an evil, and the aim of his life to be peace, which is attainable by the destruction of desires. He does not believe in something irrational, but, on the contrary, in what makes his world-conception more rational than it was without this faith. The same holds good in the case of a real Christian, who believes that God is the spiritual father of all men and that the highest good of man is attained when he recognizes his sonhood to God and the brotherhood of all men among themselves. All these beliefs, though incapable of proof, are not irrational in themselves, but, on the contrary, lend a more rational meaning to the phenomena of life, which, without these beliefs, seem irrational and contradictory. Besides, all these beliefs, in determining man's position in the world, inevitably demand certain acts to correspond to this position. Therefore, if a religious teaching asserts senseless propositions which explain nothing and only add

to the confusion of the comprehension of life, this is not faith, but a distortion of it, such as has lost the chief properties of the true faith and not only does not demand anything of men, but even means to them a ministration. One of the chief distinctions between a true faith and its distortion is this, that with the distortion of faith a man demands of God that, in return for his sacrifices and prayers, God shall fulfil his wishes, shall serve man, but with the true faith a man feels that God demands of him, man, the fulfilment of His will, — that He demands that man shall serve God.

Not only do the men of our time not have this faith, but they do not even know what it is, and by faith they mean either the oral repetition of what is given out to them as the essence of faith, or the performance of rites which may help them to receive what they wish for, as they are taught to believe by the ecclesiastic Christianity.

## 8

The men of our time live without any faith. One part of mankind, the cultured, rich minority, having freed itself from the ecclesiastic suggestion, believes in nothing, because it considers every faith to be either foolish or a useful instrument for exerting power over the masses. But the vast majority of the poor and the uncultured, who, with the rare exceptions of men who actually believe, are under the influence of the hypnosis, think that they believe in what is suggested to them under the guise of faith, but that is not faith, because it does not explain to man his position in the world, and only confuses it more than ever. Of this position and mutual relation of the unbelieving, hypocritical minority and the hypnotized majority is the life of our world, which calls itself Christian, composed. And this life, both of the minority, which holds in its hands the means of the hypnotization,



and of the hypnotized majority, is terrible, on account of the cruelty and immorality of the ruling men and of the crushed condition and stultification of the vast labouring masses. Never, at no time of the religious decline, has the neglect and oblivion of the chief property of every religion, especially the Christian, that of the equality of men, reached such a stage as in our day. The chief cause of the terrible present-day cruelty of man toward man is due, not only to the complete absence of religion, but also to the refined complexity of life, which conceals from men the consequences of their acts. No matter how cruel an Attila, a Dzhingis-Khan, and their men may have been, so long as they personally killed people, the process of killing must have been disagreeable to them, and still more disagreeable the consequences of the killing, — the sobs of the relatives, the presence of the corpses. Thus the consequences of the cruelty moderated cruelty itself. But in our time we kill people through such a complicated system of transmission, and the consequences of our cruelty are so carefully removed and concealed from us, that there are no actions to restrain cruelty, and the cruelty of one set of men against another has been growing and growing, and has in our time reached limits never reached before.

I think that if in our time, not a Nero, who is by all men recognized as a malefactor, but the simplest kind of an enterprising man wanted to make a pond of human blood for the sick, the wealthy, to bathe in, by the prescription of learned physicians, he would be able without molestation to arrange this matter, provided he did so within decent, accepted forms, that is, provided he did not forcibly compel men to draw their blood, but placed them in such a condition that they could not live without doing so, and, besides, invited the clergy and the learned, the first — to sanctify the new pond, as they sanctify cannon, guns, prisons, gibbets, and the second — to discover the proof of the necessity and legality of such an

establishment, just as they discovered the proof of the necessity of wars and of houses of prostitution. The fundamental principle of every religion — the equality of all men among themselves — has been so forgotten, abandoned, and choked up by all kinds of stupid dogmas in the professed religion, and in science this same inequality has, in the form of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, been to such an extent recognized as a necessary condition of life, that the destruction of millions of human lives for the advantage of the minority of the ruling men is regarded as a most common and necessary phenomenon of life, and is constantly taking place.

The men of our time never get tired boasting of those brilliant, unusual, colossal results achieved by technical art in the nineteenth century.

Without any doubt there has never in history existed such material progress, that is, such a command of the forces of Nature, as has been achieved in the nineteenth century. But there is also no doubt concerning this, that there has never in history been an example of such an immoral life, free from all the forces which restrain the animal tendencies of man, as the one which our Christian humanity lives, growing more and more beastly all the time. The material progress achieved by the men of the nineteenth century is really great; but this progress has been bought by a neglect of the most elementary demands of morality, such as humanity never attained, not even in the time of Dzhingis-Khan, or Attila, or Nero.

Unquestionably it is all very nice to have ironclads, railways, printing, tunnels, phonographs, Röntgen rays, and so forth. All that is very nice, but not less nice, not to be compared with anything, as Ruskin said, are the human lives which now are mercilessly wasted by the million in order to acquire ironclads, railways, tunnels, which not only do not adorn life, but even distort it.

In reply to this we are generally told that they are now inventing and in time will have invented such appliances that men's lives will not be wasted as they are now, but that is not true. So long as men do not consider all men to be their brothers, and do not consider human lives to be the most sacred thing, a thing which cannot be violated, and the maintenance of which should be considered the first, most urgent duty, that is, if men will not act religiously toward one another, they will always waste each other's lives for their own personal advantages. No fool will consent to waste thousands, if he is able to attain the same end by spending one hundred with the addition of a few human lives which are in his power. In Chicago approximately the same number of men are killed every year by the railroads, and the owners of the roads systematically introduce no appliances by which people may not be killed, having figured out that the damages paid every year to the families of the injured are less than the interest on the sum necessary for such appliances.

It is very likely that the men who ruin human lives for their advantage will be put to shame by public opinion or will be compelled to introduce these appliances. But so long as men are irreligious and do their business before men and not before God, they will, though introducing life-saving appliances in one place, again use human lives in another business, as being the most profitable material for gains.

It is easy to conquer Nature and to make a lot of railways, steamships, museums, and so forth, if human lives are not spared. The Egyptian kings prided themselves on their pyramids, and we admire them, forgetting the millions of slaves' lives that were ruined in these structures. Even so we admire our exposition palaces, ironclads, cables, forgetting how we pay for all that. We could be proud of it all, only if it were all done without restraint by free men, and not by slaves.

Christian nations have conquered and subjugated the

American Indians, the Hindoos, the Africans, and now conquer and subjugate the Chinese, and are proud of this. But these conquests and subjugations are not due to the fact that the Christian nations are spiritually higher than the nations subjugated, but, on the contrary, to the fact that they are spiritually incomparably lower than they. To say nothing of the Hindoos and the Chinese, even the Zulus have certain religious, obligatory rules, which prescribe certain acts and forbid others; but our Christian nations have no such rules. Rome conquered the whole world at the precise time when it was free from all religion. The same thing, though in a much higher degree, is now taking place with the Christian nations. They are all in the same condition, without religion, and so, in spite of the inner discord, they are all united in one federative band of robbers, in which theft, pillage, debauchery, the murder of individual persons, and mass murder are not only committed without the slightest pricks of conscience, but also with the greatest self-satisfaction, as happened lately in China. Some believe in nothing and are proud of it; others pretend to be believing in what they, for the sake of their advantage, under the guise of faith, impress upon the people; and others again, the vast majority, all the masses, accept as faith that suggestion under which they are, and slavishly submit to everything which is demanded of them by the commanding and unbelieving suggesters.

These suggesters ask for the same thing that was asked for by all the Neros, who tried in some way to fill the void of their lives,—the gratification of their senseless, all-pervading luxury. Now luxury is obtained in no other way than by the enslavement of men; the moment there is enslavement, luxury is increased; and the increase of luxury invariably brings with it the intensification of enslavement, because it is only the hungry, the cold, the needy, who can work all their lives at something that

they do not need, but which is needed for the amusement of their masters.

## 9

In the sixth chapter of Genesis there is a profound passage, in which the writer of the Bible says that before the flood God, seeing that the spirit which He had given men to serve Him with had been used by them to serve their own flesh, became so angered at them that He was sorry for having created them and, before destroying men, decided to shorten their lives to 120 years. It is precisely the thing for which, according to the words of the Bible, God grew angry and shortened their lives, that has now happened with the men of our Christian world.

Reason is that force of men which determines their relation to the world ; and since the relation of all men to the world is one and the same, the establishment of this relation, that is, religion, unites men. But the union of all men gives them the highest physical and spiritual good accessible to them.

The perfect union, in the perfect, highest reason, and so the perfect good, is an ideal toward which humanity is striving ; but every religion which gives the men of a certain society the same answers to their questions as to what the world is and what they, the men in this world, are, unites men and so brings them nearer to the realization of the good. But when reason, abstracting itself from its proper activity, — the establishment of its relation to God and its activity in correspondence with this relation, — is directed, not only upon the ministration of the flesh and on an evil struggle with men and with other beings, but also upon justifying this its bad life, which is contrary to man's properties and destination, then there result those terrible calamities from which the majority of men suffer now, and that condition under which a return to a rational and good life presents itself as almost impossible.

The pagans who are united among themselves by the grossest religious teaching are much nearer to the cognition of the truth than the so-called Christian nations of our time who live without any religion, and in the midst of whom the most advanced men are sure and impress upon others that there is no need of religion and that it is much better to live without any religion.

Among the pagans there may be found men who, having come to comprehend the lack of a correspondence between their faith and the ever increasing knowledge and demands of their reason, will work out or adopt a religious teaching which is more in accord with the spiritual condition of the people, and in which they will be joined by their compatriots and fellow believers. But the men of our world, some of whom look upon religion as an instrument for ruling men, while others regard religion as a piece of foolishness, and others again, the vast majority of the people, being under the influence of a gross deception, think that they are in possession of the true religion, become impermeable for every forward movement and approximation to the truth.

Proud of their perfections, which are necessary for a physical life, and of their refined, barren reasoning, which has for its purpose to prove, not only their own righteousness, but also their superiority over all nations during all periods of history, they sink in their ignorance and depravity, fully convinced that they are standing upon such a height as has never before been reached by humanity, and that every forward step of theirs on the road of ignorance and depravity raises them to a greater height of enlightenment and progress.

## 10

It is proper for man to establish an agreement between his bodily — physical — and rational — spiritual

—activity. A man cannot be satisfied, so long as this agreement has not been established in one way or another. This agreement is established in two ways: one, when a man with his reason determines the necessity or desirability of a certain act or acts, and then acts in conformity with the decision of his reason, and the other, when a man commits acts under the influence of feeling, and then invents a mental explanation or justification for them.

The first way of harmonizing the acts with reason is characteristic of men who profess some religion and who, on the basis of its tenets, know what acts they should perform, and what not. The second way is characteristic chiefly of irreligious men, who have no common basis for the determination of the value of their acts, and who, therefore, always establish an agreement between their reason and their acts, not by a subordination of their acts to reason, but by this, that, having committed an act on the basis of a sentimental infatuation, they later employ reason for the purpose of justifying their acts.

A religious man, knowing what in his activity and in the activity of other men is good or bad, and why one thing is good and another bad, if he sees the contradiction between the demands of his reason and his acts or the acts of other men, uses all the efforts of his reason to find a means for the destruction of these contradictions, that is, for learning how in the best way to harmonize his acts with the demands of his reason. But an irreligious man, who has no guidance in the determination of the value of acts, independently of their agreeableness, in submitting to the whims of his feelings, which are most varied and frequently contradictory, involuntarily falls into contradictions; but in falling into these contradictions, he tries to solve or conceal them by more or less complex and clever, but always false, reflections. Therefore, while the reflections of the religious people are always

simple, not complicated, and true, the mental activity of the irreligious people becomes particularly refined, complicated, and false.

I will take the simplest kind of an example. A man is given to debauchery, that is, he is not chaste, is false to his wife, or, without marrying, abandons himself to debauchery. If he is a religious man, he knows that this is bad, and the whole activity of his mind is directed to finding means for freeing himself from the vice,—he tries to have no communion with fornicators and harlots, to do more work, to make his life as severe as possible, to avoid looking upon women as an object of lust, and so forth. All this is very simple and comprehensible for all men. But if a depraved man is irreligious, he immediately invents all kinds of explanations as to why he loves women so much. And here begin all kinds of most complex, cunning, refined reflections about the union of souls, about beauty, about freedom in love, and so forth, which, the more they spread, the more they confuse the matter and conceal what is needed.

The same thing takes place for irreligious men in all spheres of activity and thought. To conceal the inner contradictions, complex, refined reflections are accumulated, and these, filling the mind with all kind of bosh, abstract people's attention from what is important and essential, and make it possible for them to persist in the lie in which the men of our time, without noticing it, live.

"Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," it says in the Gospel. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved because they are evil."

And so the men of our world, in consequence of the absence of religion, having arranged for themselves a most cruel, animal, immoral life, have also carried the complex, refined, trifling activity of the mind, which conceals the



evil of this life, to such a degree of useless complication and intricacy that the majority of men have entirely lost the ability to see the difference between good and evil, between the lie and the truth.

For the men of our world there is not one question which they can approach directly and simply: all questions, — economic, internal and external governmental, political, diplomatic, scientific, — to say nothing of philosophic and religious questions, are with such artfulness put so incorrectly and are, therefore, swaddled in such a thick cloth of complex, unnecessary reflections, refined distortions of ideas and words, sophisms, and discussions, that all reflections about such questions circle in one place, without catching into anything, and, like wheels without the driving-belt of transmission, lead to nothing but that one purpose for which they have arisen, — to concealing from oneself and from men that evil in which they live and which they do.

## 11

In all the spheres of the so-called science of our time there is the same feature, which invalidates all the efforts of men's minds that are directed upon the investigation of various spheres of knowledge. This feature consists in this, that all the investigations of the science of our time avoid the essential question to which an answer is demanded, and investigate side issues, the investigations of which lead to nothing and become the more entangled, the farther they are carried on. Nor can it be different with a science which chooses its subjects of investigation by chance, and not according to the demands of the religious world-conception, which determines what is to be studied and when, what first and what last. Thus, for example, in the now fashionable subject of sociology, or political economy, there would seem to be but one question: why do some people do nothing, while others work

for them? (If there is another question, which consists in this, why people work separately, interfering with one another, and not in common with all men, which would be more advantageous, this question is included in the first. If there shall be no inequality, there will be no struggle.) There would seem to be but this one question, but science does not even think of putting and answering it, but introduces far-fetched considerations, in which it deals in such a way that deductions from them can in no case either solve the fundamental question or contribute to its solution. They begin with considerations as to what has been and is, and this past and present are viewed as something invariable, like the course of the celestial luminaries, and they invent abstract ideas of values, capital, profit, percentage, and there appears a complex play of the minds of men quarrelling among themselves, which has been lasting for a hundred years. In reality the question can be solved easily and simply.

Its solution consists in this, that, since all men are brothers and equal among themselves, everybody must act toward others as he wishes that others should act toward him, and, therefore, the whole matter is in the destruction of the false religious law and the establishment of the new law. But the advanced men of the Christian world not only do not accept this solution, but, on the contrary, try to conceal from men the possibility of such a solution and for this purpose abandon themselves to that empty sophistry which they call science.

The same thing takes place in the juridical sphere. It would seem that the only essential question consists in this, why there are men who allow themselves to offer violence to other people, to rob, imprison, and execute them, to send them to war, and many more things. The solution of the question is very simple, if we consider it from the one relevant point of view,—the religious. From the religious point of view a man cannot and must

not commit any acts of violence against his neighbour, and so, to solve the question, only one thing is needed, — to destroy all superstitions and sophisms which permit violence, and clearly to impress upon people the religious principles which exclude the possibility of violence.

The advanced people, however, not only fail to do so, but also use all the cunning of their mind for the purpose of concealing from men the possibility and the urgency of this solution. They write mountains of books about all kinds of laws, — civil, criminal, police, ecclesiastic, financial, and other laws, — and expound and discuss these themes, fully convinced that they are doing not only a useful, but also a very important work. But they do not even answer the question as to why men, being essentially equal, can some of them judge, coerce, rob, execute others, and do not even recognize its existence. According to their teaching it turns out that this violence is not exerted by men, but by something abstract called the state.

In a similar way the learned men of our time avoid and pass over in silence the essential questions and conceal the inner contradictions in all the spheres of knowledge. In the historical sciences there is one essential question : how have the working classes, that is, 999 thousandths of all humanity, lived ? To this question there is not even a semblance of an answer ; the question does not even exist, and mountains of books are written by the historians of one school as to how Louis XI. had a belly-ache, what abominations were committed by Elizabeth of England and by John IV., who were the ministers, and what kind of verses and comedies were written by the literary men for the amusement of these kings and their paramours and ministers. But the historians of another school describe the locality in which the people lived, what they ate, what they traded in, what garments they wore, in general, what could not have had any influence

upon the life of the people, but was the consequence of their religion, which by the historians of this category is recognized as the result of the food and the apparel used by the people.

However, the answer to the question as to how the working people used to live can be given only by recognizing religion as a necessary condition of the people's life, and so the answer is to be found in the study of those religions which were professed by the people, and which placed the people in the condition in which they were.

In the natural history sciences, it would seem, there was no particular necessity for dimming men's sound reason; but even here, thanks to the mental process applied by the science of our time, they lose themselves, instead of giving the most natural answers to the question as to what the world of living beings, plants, and animals is, and how it is subdivided, in an empty, obscure and absolutely useless prattle, which is chiefly directed against the Biblical history of the creation of the world, about how the organisms originated, which nobody needs to know and which nobody can know, because this origin, no matter how we may explain it, will always be lost for us in infinite time and space. And on these themes they have invented theories and retorts, and additions to theories, which form millions of books, and the unexpected deduction from which is this one, that the law of life to which man must submit is the struggle for existence.

The applied sciences, moreover, such as the technical sciences and medicine, on account of the absence of a guiding religious principle, involuntarily depart from their rational purpose, and receive false directions. Thus the whole of the technical sciences are not directed upon the alleviation of the people's labour, but upon improvements needed only by the wealthy classes, which still more separate the rich from the poor, the masters from

the slaves. If some advantages from these inventions and improvements, tiny bits of them, find their way among the popular masses, this is not so because they are intended for the masses, but only because by their property they cannot be withheld from the people.

The same is true of medical science, which in its false direction has reached a point where it is accessible only to the wealthy classes ; but the masses, from their manner of life and poverty and neglect of the chief questions of the improvement of their life of wretchedness, can make use of it to such an extent and under such conditions that this aid only shows more clearly the deviation of medical science from its purpose.

Most striking, however, is this deviation from the fundamental questions and their distortion in what in our time is called philosophy. It would seem that there is one question which is subject to the solution of philosophy, and that is: What must I do? To this question there have been some kinds of answers in the philosophy of the Christian nations, though these were connected with the greatest unnecessary confusion of ideas: such answers were those by Spinoza, by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, by Schopenhauer, and especially by Rousseau. But of late, since the time of Hegel, who recognized everything in existence as sensible, the question as to what we shall do has been put in the background, and philosophy directs all its attention to the investigation of what is, and to the subordination of this to a previously stated theory. This is the first step down. The second step that brings human thought even lower is the recognition of the struggle for existence as a fundamental law, only because this struggle may be observed in the case of animals and plants. According to this theory it is assumed that the destruction of the weaker is a law that should not be interfered with. Finally, we come to the third step, where the sophomoric attitudinizing of the half-

witted Nietzsche, which does not even represent anything whole or coherent, — mere sketches of immoral, unfounded ideas, — is regarded by advanced men as the last word of philosophic science. In reply to the question as to what we shall do, we are told outright : we must live for our pleasure, without paying any attention to the lives of other men.

If any one should doubt the terrible intoxication and bestialization which has been reached by Christian humanity in our day, the unusual success of Nietzsche's writings, to say nothing of the late Boer and China crimes, which have been defended by the clergy and have been recognized as heroic exploits by the mighty of the world, may serve as an incontrovertible proof of it. We have before us the incoherent, most rankly sensational writings of a witty, but narrow-minded and abnormal German, who is obsessed by the mania of greatness. These writings, neither by talent nor by their thoroughness, can lay any claim to the public's attention. Such writings would not only not have attracted any attention in the days of Kant, Leibniz, or Hume, or even fifty years ago, but could not even have made their appearance then. In our time, however, all the so-called cultured humanity goes into ecstasies over Mr. Nietzsche's delirium, and discusses and elucidates it, and his works are printed in all languages and in an endless number of copies.

Turgénev said wittily that there are reverse common-places which are frequently used by untalented men who wish to attract attention. Everybody knows, for example, that water is wet, and suddenly a man says with a serious countenance that water is dry, — not ice, — but dry water, and such a seriously expressed assertion attracts attention.

Similarly the whole world knows that virtue consists in the suppression of the passions, in self-renunciation. This is not only known to Christianity, against which

Nietzsche pretends to fight, but is also an eternal supreme law arrived at by all humanity, in Brahmanism, in Buddhism, in Confucianism, in the ancient Persian religion. Suddenly there appears a man who announces that he has become convinced that self-renunciation, humility, meekness, love, — all these are vices that ruin humanity (he has in mind Christianity, forgetting all the other religions). Naturally such an assertion at first puzzles one. But after a little thought and after finding in the work no proofs of this strange proposition, every sensible man must reject such a book and marvel, seeing that there is nothing so foolish that in our time it cannot find a publisher. But with Nietzsche's books it is not so. The majority of so-called enlightened men seriously analyze the theory of the overhumanity, recognizing its author as a great philosopher, an heir of Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant.

This is all due to the fact that the majority of so-called enlightened men of our time hate the mention of virtue, of its chief foundation, — self-renunciation, love, — which embarrass and condemn their animal life, and rejoice when they meet with some even poorly, senselessly, incoherently expressed teaching of egoism, cruelty, and the assertion of their own happiness and greatness at the expense of other people's lives, a teaching which they live by.

## 12

Christ reproached the Pharisees and scribes for having taken the keys of the kingdom of God and for not entering themselves and not letting anybody else enter.

The same thing is being done nowadays by the learned scribes of our time: these men have seized the keys, not of the kingdom of heaven, but of enlightenment, and they do not enter themselves, and do not let others in. The priests, the clergy, have by means of all kinds of decep-

tions and hypnosis impressed upon people that Christianity is not a teaching which preaches the equality of all men and so destroys the whole present pagan structure of life, but that, on the contrary, it maintains this structure; prescribes that people be distinguished from one another like the stars; prescribes that it be accepted that every power is from God and must be obeyed without any discussion; and in general inculcates upon the oppressed the idea that their condition is from God and that they must bear it in humility and meekness, and must submit to those oppressors who not only may fail to be meek and humble, but must, correcting others, teach, punish,—as emperors, kings, popes, bishops, and all kinds of lay and spiritual powers,—and live in splendour and luxury, which their subjects are obliged to supply to them. But the ruling classes, thanks to this false teaching which they maintain by force, dominate the masses, whom they compel to serve their idleness, luxury, and vices. Meanwhile, the only men, the learned, who have freed themselves from the hypnosis, the men who alone could free the masses from oppression, and who say that they wish this, instead of doing what might attain this end, do the very opposite, imagining that they are thus serving the masses.

It would seem that from a mere superficial observation of what the men who keep the masses in subjection are interested in, these people might understand what the nations are moved by and what keeps them in a certain state, and should direct all their forces to this power; but, far from doing so, they consider this to be quite useless.

It is as though these men did not wish to see the truth and as though, in spite of their carefully, often even sincerely, doing for the masses the most varied things, they did not do the one thing necessary for them, so that their activity resembles the activity of a man who should try with the effort of his muscles to shift a train, whereas he needs but get on the tender and do what he constantly



sees the engineer do, — move the lever which admits the steam to the cylinder. This steam is the religious world conception of men. They need only see with what zeal all the rulers defend this power, by means of which they rule over the nations, to understand to what they must direct their efforts, in order to free the masses from their enslavement.

What does the Turkish Sultan defend, and what does he cling to most? And why does the Russian Emperor, upon arriving in a city, make it his first business to visit the relics and images? And why, in spite of all his varnish of culture, does the German Emperor in all his speeches, in season and out of season, speak of God, of Christ, of the holiness of religion, of the oath, and so forth? Because they all know that their power is based on the army, and the army, the possibility of the existence of the army, only upon religion. And if rich people are particularly pious and pretend to be believers, attend church, and observe the Sabbath, they do so chiefly because their instinct of self-preservation tells them that with the religion which they profess is connected their exclusive advantageous position in society.

Frequently all these men do not know in what way their power is maintained by the religious deception, but they know from a feeling of self-preservation what the weak spot of their position is, and they first of all defend this spot. These men have always admitted and always will admit a socialistic, even a revolutionary propaganda, within certain limits; but they will never allow the religious foundations to be touched.

And so, if the advanced men of our time — the scholars, liberals, socialists, revolutionists, anarchists — cannot from history and from psychology understand what it is the nations are moved by, they could convince themselves by this objective experience that what moves them is not to be found in material conditions, but only in religion.

But, strange to say, the learned, the advanced men of our time, who very sensitively analyze and understand the conditions of the lives of the nations, do not see what blinds one by its very obviousness. If the men who do so leave the masses in their religious ignorance purposely, in order to maintain their advantageous position amidst a minority, this is a terrible, disgusting deception. Those who act like that are the very hypocrites whom more than any other, or even alone, Christ condemned, because no inhuman beings and scoundrels have introduced so much evil into the life of humanity as these men.

But if these men are sincere, the only explanation of this strange obfuscation is this, that, as the masses are under the influence of the false religion, so also the so-called enlightened men of our time are under the influence of the false science, which has decided that the chief nerve by which humanity has always lived is no longer of any use to it and may be supplanted by something else.

## 13

In this error or cunning of the scribes — the educated men of our world — does the peculiarity of our time consist, and in this is to be found the cause of that wretched condition in which Christian humanity lives, and of that bestialization in which it sinks more and more.

As a rule, the advanced, cultured men of our world assert that the false religious beliefs professed by the masses are not of any particular importance, and that it is not worth our while, nor even necessary, directly to struggle against them, as formerly did Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others. Science, that is, all that scattered, incidental information which they disseminate among the masses, will, in their opinion, naturally attain this end, that is, a man, having learned how many millions of miles the earth is removed from the sun and what metals are

to be found in the stars and the sun, will stop believing in the propositions of the church.

In this sincere or insincere assertion or assumption there is a great delusion or terrible cunning. From his earliest years, — an age most susceptible to suggestion, — when an educator cannot be careful enough about what is transmitted to the child, they inculcate upon him the stupid and immoral dogmas of the so-called Christian religion, which are not compatible with reason or with science. They teach the child the dogma of the Trinity, which is incomprehensible to a normal brain, the descent of one of these gods upon earth for the redemption of the human race, His resurrection and ascension to heaven; he is taught to expect the second coming and punishment with eternal torments for not believing in these dogmas; he is taught to pray concerning his needs, and many more things. And when these propositions, which are not in harmony with reason, nor with contemporary knowledge, nor with the human consciousness, are indelibly impressed upon the child's susceptible mind, he is left alone, to find his way as well as he can amidst the contradictions which result from the dogmas accepted by him and made his own as the undoubted truth. No one tells him how he could and should harmonize these contradictions. If the theologians attempt to harmonize these contradictions, these attempts only confuse the matter more than ever. By degrees a man gets used to the idea (and in this he is strongly supported by the theologians) that reason cannot be relied upon, and that, therefore, everything is possible in the world, and that in man there is nothing by means of which he can distinguish good from evil and the lie from the truth, and that in what is most important to him, — in his acts, — he must not be guided by his reason, but by what others tell him. Naturally a terrible distortion in a man's spiritual world must be produced by such an education, and this distortion is in maturer years main-

tained with all the means of suggestion, which is exercised all the time against the masses with the aid of the clergy.

But if a spiritually strong man with great labour and effort succeeds in freeing himself from the hypnosis in which he has been educated since his childhood and maintained in his maturer years, that distortion of his soul, through which he has been impressed with unbelief in his own reason, cannot pass unnoticed, just as in the physical world the poisoning of the organism with some powerful venom cannot pass without leaving any trace. Having freed himself from the hypnosis of the deception, such a man, hating the lie from which he has just freed himself, will naturally acquire that teaching of the advanced men according to which every religion is regarded as one of the chief impediments in humanity's forward movement on the path of progress. Having acquired this teaching, such a man will become just as unprincipled a man as his teacher, a man who is guided in life by nothing but his desires, and who, far from condemning himself for this, considers himself for this very reason to be on the highest accessible point of spiritual development.

Thus it will be with the men who are spiritually strongest. Those who are less strong, though they may awaken to doubt, will never fully free themselves from the deception in which they are brought up, and, allying themselves with all existing kinds of finely spun, misty theories, which are to justify the stupidity of the dogmas accepted by them, and inventing others, will live in the sphere of doubts, haziness, sophisms, and self-deception, and will only contribute to the obfuscation of the masses and will counteract their awakening.

But the majority of men, having no strength and no chance to struggle against the suggestion exercised against them, will live and die for generations, as they now live,

deprived of man's highest good, — the true religious concept of life, — and will always form nothing but a submissive tool for the classes that rule over them and deceive them.

It is this terrible deception that the advanced men say is not important and is not worth struggling against. The only explanation of such an assertion, if these who make it are sincere, is this, that they themselves are under the hypnosis of the false science; but if they are not sincere, the attack of the established beliefs is not advantageous and frequently is dangerous. In any case, in one way or another, the assertion that the profession of a false religion is harmless or at least not important, and that, therefore, it is possible to disseminate enlightenment without destroying the religious deception, is absolutely untrue.

The salvation of humanity from its calamities is only in its liberation from the hypnosis in which it is held by its priests as also from the one into which it is led by the learned. In order to pour something into a vessel it is necessary first to free it from what it contains. Just so it is necessary to free men from the deception in which they are held, in order that they may be able to accept the true religion, that is, a regular relation to the beginning of everything, to God, which would correspond to the development of humanity, and a guidance for their activity, as deduced from this relation.

## 14

“But is there a true religion? All the religions are infinitely varied, and we have no right to call any one of them true, simply because it more nearly fits in with our tastes,” will say the men who consider the religions from their external forms as a certain kind of a disease, from which they feel themselves free, but from which the

rest of the people are still suffering. But that is not true : the religions differ in their external forms, but they are all alike in their fundamental principles. It is these fundamental principles of all religions that form the true religion which alone in our time is proper for all men, and the adoption of which can alone save humanity from all its calamities.

Humanity has been living for a long time, and as it has traditionally worked out its practical acquisitions, so it could not help but work out those spiritual principles which form the foundations of its life, and the rules of conduct which result from them. The fact that the blinded men do not see them does not prove their non-existence. Such a religion of our time, common to all men, — not some one religion with all its peculiarities and distortions, but a religion which consists in those religious propositions which are identical in all the widely disseminated and well-known religions, as professed by more than nine-tenths of the human race, — does exist, and men have not yet become completely brutalized because the best men of all the nations, even though it be unconsciously, hold to this religion and profess it, and it is only the suggestion of the deception which with the aid of the priests and the learned is exercised against people that keeps them from accepting it consciously.

The tenets of this true religion are to such an extent proper to men that, as soon as they are communicated to men, they are accepted as something well known and natural. For us this true religion is Christianity, in those of its tenets in which it coincides, not with the external forms, but with the fundamental propositions of Brahmanism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Buddhism, and even Mohammedanism. Even so for those who profess Brahmanism, Confucianism, and so forth, the true religion will be the one whose fundamental propositions coincide with the fundamental propositions of all the other great

religions. These propositions are very simple, comprehensible, and incomplex.

These propositions are that there is a God, the beginning of everything ; that in man there is a particle of this divine principle, which he is able by his life to increase or diminish in himself ; that for the increase of this principle a man must suppress his passions and increase his love in himself ; and that the practical means for doing this consists in acting toward others as we would that others should act toward us. All these propositions are common to Brahmanism, to Judaism, to Confucianism, to Taoism, to Buddhism, to Christianity, to Mohammedanism. (Though Buddhism does not give a definition of God, it none the less recognizes that with which man blends and into which he sinks, when he reaches Nirvana. Thus that with which man unites as he sinks into Nirvana is that principle which is recognized as God by Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism.)

"But this is not religion," will be said by the men of our time, who are accustomed to accept what is supernatural, that is, senseless, as the chief symptom of religion. "This is anything you please, philosophy, ethics, and reflections, but not religion." Religion, according to their conception, must be absurd and incomprehensible (*credo quia absurdum*). And yet it is only out of these propositions or, rather, in consequence of their being preached as a religious teaching that by a long process of distortion have been worked out all those absurdities of miracles and supernatural events which are regarded as the fundamental symptoms of every religion. To assert that supernaturalness and absurdity form the fundamental properties of religion is the same as to assert, when one observes nothing but rotten apples, that the bitterness of decay and an injurious effect upon the stomach are the fundamental property of the apple.

Religion is the determination of man's relation to the

beginning of everything, and of man's destination, which follows from this proposition, and, following from this destination, of rules for his conduct. And the universal religion, the fundamental propositions of which are identical in all professions, fully satisfies these demands. It determines man's relation to God, as of the part to the whole, and from this relation deduces man's destination, which consists in the increase of the divine property in himself; now it is man's destination to deduce practical demands from the rule of doing unto others as we would that others would do unto us.

People frequently doubt, and at one time I myself doubted, whether such an abstract rule as this, that we should do unto others as we would that others should do unto us, could be as obligatory a rule and guide of acts as the simpler rules, — of fasting, prayer, communion, and so forth. But to this doubt an incontrovertible answer is given by the spiritual condition of, say, a Russian peasant, who would rather die than spit the Eucharist out on the manure pile, and yet is ready at the command of men to kill his brothers.

Why could not the demands which are deduced from the rule of not doing unto another what we should not wish another to do unto us — such as that we should not kill our brothers, should not curse, commit adultery, take vengeance, make use of our brother's want for the gratification of our lusts, and many others — be inculcated with the same force and become as obligatory and inviolable as is the belief in the sacredness of the Eucharist, the images, and so forth, to people whose faith is based more on trust than on any clear internal consciousness ?

The truths of the religion of our time common to all men are so simple, so comprehensible, and so near to the



heart of every man, that, it would seem, it would suffice for the parents, rulers, and instructors, in place of the obsolete and absurd doctrines about the Trinities, mothers of God, redemptions, Indras, Trimurtis, heaven-ascending Buddhas and Mohammeds, in which they frequently do not believe themselves, to inculcate upon the children and the adults the simple, clear truths of the religion which is common to all men, — the metaphysical essence of which consists in this, that in man there dwells the divine spirit, and the practical rule of which is this, that a man should act toward others as he wishes that others should act toward him, and the whole human life would change of its own accord. If only, as now children and adults are impressed with the faith that God sent His Son in order to redeem Adam's sins, and established His church, which must be obeyed, and the rules resulting from this, which are to pray at such a time and place, and to offer sacrifices, and at such a time to abstain from a certain kind of food and on certain days from work, it were inculcated upon men and asserted that God is spirit, whose manifestation lives in us and whose power we can increase by means of our lives! If this and everything which naturally results from these foundations were inculcated upon men, just as now they are impressed with useless stories about impossible events and with rules about meaningless rites resulting from these stories, there would, in place of a senseless war and disunion, and without the aid of diplomas, international laws, congresses of peace, political economists, and socialists of every description, very soon result a peaceful, concordant, happy life of humanity, guided by the one religion.

But nothing of the kind is taking place; not only is the deception of the false religion not destroyed and the true religion not preached, but men, on the contrary, more and more depart from the possibility of accepting the truth.

The chief reason why men do not do what is natural, necessary, and possible, consists in this, that the men of our time have become so accustomed, in consequence of a long irreligious life, to arranging and strengthening their existence by means of violence, bayonets, bullets, prisons, gibbets, that it seems to them that such a structure of life is normal, and even that there can be no other. Not only is this the belief of those to whom the present order is advantageous, but also those who suffer from it are so stupefied by the suggestion exerted against them that they consider violence the only means of order in human society. And yet it is this very arrangement and strengthening of human life by means of violence that more than anything else removes men from the comprehension of the causes of their suffering and so from the possibility of a true order.

What is taking place is very much what a bad and ill-intentioned physician does when he drives in a vicious eruption, not only deceiving the patient by this, but even aggravating the disease itself and making its cure impossible.

To the ruling men, who have enslaved the masses and who think and say, "*Après nous le deluge*," it seems very convenient by means of the army, the clergy, the soldiers, and the police, and by means of threatening bayonets, bullets, prisons, workhouses, gibbets, to compel the enslaved men to continue to live in their stultification and enslavement, and not to interfere with the rulers in their enjoyment of their position. And this the ruling people do, calling such an order of things good, though nothing so much interferes with the true social order as this. In reality such an order is not only not good, but is even an establishment of evil.

If the men of our societies, with the residue of those religious principles which none the less live in the masses, did not constantly see crimes committed by those men

who have taken it upon themselves to watch over order and morality in the lives of men, — wars, executions, prisons, taxes, the sale of whiskey, and of opium, — they would never think of doing one-hundredth part of those evil deeds and deceits, and the violence and murder, which they now commit with the full assurance that these deeds are good and proper to men.

The law of human life is such that its improvement, both for the individual and the society of men, is possible only through an internal moral perfection. But all the attempts of men to improve their lives by external interactions by means of violence serve as a most efficient sermon and example of evil, and so not only fail to improve life, but, on the contrary, increase the evil, which grows more and more, like a snowball, and more and more removes men from the one possibility of the true improvement of their lives.

In proportion as the habit of violence and of crimes, which under the guise of law are committed by the guardians of the peace and of morality, becomes more and more frequent and more and more cruel, and is more and more justified by the suggestion of that lie which is given out as religion, men become more and more confirmed in the idea that the law of their life is not in love and in mutual service, but in struggle and mutual devouring.

And the more they become confirmed in this idea which debases them to the level of the animal, the more difficult it is for them to awaken from that hypnosis in which they are and to accept as the foundation of life the true religion of our time, which is common to all humanity.

A false circle is established: the absence of religion makes possible the animal life, which is based on violence; the animal life, which is based on violence, makes the liberation from the hypnosis and the acceptance of the true religion more and more impossible. For this reason

men do not do what is natural, possible, and indispensable in our time,—they do not destroy the deception of the similitude of religion and do not accept and preach the true religion.

## 16

Is there a way out from this magic circle, and in what does it consist ?

At first it appears that these men ought to be brought out of that circle by the governments which have taken it upon themselves to guide the life of the nations for their own good. Thus always thought the people who tried to substitute for the structure of life which is based on violence another structure of life, which is rational and based on mutual service and love. Thus also thought the Christian reformers, and the founders of various theories of European communism, and the famous Chinese reformer, Mi-ti, who proposed to the government, for the good of the nation, to teach the children in the schools non-military sciences and exercises, and not to give to adults rewards for military acts, but to teach children and adults rules of respect and love, and to offer rewards and encouragement for acts of love. Thus also have thought many Russian religious reformers from among the masses, many of whom I have known, beginning with Syutáev and ending with an old man who has five times petitioned the Tsar to command the false religion to be abolished and true Christianity to be preached.

It naturally seems to people that the governments, which justify their existence by their care for the public weal, ought, for the confirmation of this good, to wish to use that one means, which in no case can be injurious to the masses and which can be productive of only the most fruitful consequences. But the governments have never and nowhere taken this obligation upon themselves ; they have, on the contrary, always and everywhere with

the greatest zeal defended the existing false, obsolete creed, and have with all the means at their command persecuted those who have tried to give the masses the foundations of the true religion. In reality it cannot be otherwise : for the governments to show up the lie of the existing religion and to preach the true religion is the same as though a man should cut off the branch on which he is sitting.

But if the governments do not do that, it would seem that it ought to be done by those learned men who, having freed themselves from the deception of the false religion, wish, as they say, to serve the masses which have nurtured them. But these men, like the governments, do not do so, in the first place, because they consider it purposeless to subject themselves to the unpleasantness and dangers of persecutions from the governments by revealing the deception which is defended by the government and which, according to their conviction, will destroy itself ; in the second place, because, considering every religion an outlived delusion, they have nothing to offer to the masses in place of the deception if they should destroy it.

There are left those great masses of unlearned men, who are subject to the hypnosis of the ecclesiastic and governmental deception, and who, therefore, think that that semblance of religion which is suggested to them is the one true religion, and that there is and can be no other. These masses are subjected to a constant, intensified action of hypnosis ; generation after generation is born, lives, and dies in that stupefied condition in which it is held by the clergy and the government, and if men free themselves from it, they inevitably find their way into the school of the learned who deny religion, and their influence becomes as useless and harmful as the influence of their teachers.

Thus this is disadvantageous to some, and impossible to others.

## 17

There seems to be no way out.

Indeed, for irreligious people there is and there can be no way out from this condition: though the men who belong to the upper ruling classes may pretend to be interested in the weal of the popular masses, they will never seriously attempt to destroy that stultification and enslavement in which the masses live and which make it possible for the upper classes to rule them (nor can they do so, since they are guided by worldly considerations). Similarly the men who belong to the enslaved, who, too, are guided by worldly considerations, cannot wish to make their otherwise bad condition worse by a struggle with the upper classes as the result of revealing the false teaching and preaching the true. Neither of them have any reason for doing so and, if they are wise people, will never try to do so.

But it is not so in the case of religious people, those religious people who, no matter how much society may be corrupted, with their own life preserve that holy fire of religion without which human life could not exist. There are times (our time is such) when these men are not to be seen, when they, despised and humbled by all, pass their lives ingloriously, as in our country, in exile, in prisons, in disciplinary battalions; but they exist and through them the rational human life is maintained. It is these religious people, no matter how few there are of them, who alone can and will break that magic circle in which all men are kept in fetters. These men can do it, because all the inconveniences and dangers, which prevent a man of the world from going counter to the existing order of life, not only do not exist for a religious man, but even increase his zeal in his struggle with the lie and in his profession in words and deeds of what he considers to be the divine truth. If he belongs to the ruling

classes he not only will not wish to conceal the truth for the sake of the advantages of his position, but, on the contrary, despising these advantages, will use all the forces of his soul for the purpose of liberating himself from these advantages and preaching the truth, since in his life there will no longer be any other aim than that of serving God. But if he belongs to the enslaved, he, renouncing the desire to improve the conditions of his carnal life, which is common to men in his position, will similarly have no other aim than that of doing God's will, in arraigning the lie and professing the truth, and no suffering and no threats will be able to keep him from living in accordance with that one meaning which he recognizes in his life. Either will act as naturally as labours a worldly man who bears privations for the acquisition of wealth or for the purpose of pleasing the mighty of the world from whom he expects some advantage. Every religious man acts thus because a man's soul which is enlightened by religion no longer lives this life of the world alone, as it is lived by irreligious people, but the eternal, infinite life, for which sufferings and death in this life are as insignificant as are, for the labourer who ploughs the field, the calluses on his hands and the weariness of his limbs.

It is these men who will break the magic circle in which people are now held fettered. No matter how few such men there are, no matter how low their social position may be, no matter how feeble they may be in intellect or education, they will, as certainly as the fire consumes the dry steppe, inflame the whole world, all the hearts of men, which have dried up from a long irreligious life and which thirst for renovation.

Religion is not a faith, once for all established, in certain supernatural events which are supposed to have taken place in the past, or in the necessity of certain prayers and rites ; nor is it, as the learned think, a remainder of

the superstitions of ancient ignorance, which in our time has no meaning and no application in life ; religion is an established relation, concordant with reason and modern knowledge, of man to everlasting life, to God, which alone moves humanity forward toward its predestined end.

“The human soul is God’s lamp,” says a wise Jewish proverb. Man is a weak, unfortunate animal so long as God’s light does not shine in him. But when this light burns up (and it burns only in a soul that is enlightened by religion), man becomes the most powerful being of the universe. This cannot be otherwise, because then it is no longer his own force, but God’s, that acts in him.

So this is what religion is and what its essence is.

*February, 1902.*



TO THE WORKING PEOPLE

1902



# TO THE WORKING PEOPLE

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“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John viii. 32).

I HAVE but little time left to live, and I should like before my death to tell you, working people, what I have been thinking about your oppressed condition and about those means which will help you to free yourselves from it.

Maybe something of what I have been thinking (and I have been thinking much about it) will do you some good.

I naturally turn to the Russian labourers, among whom I live and whom I know better than the labourers of any other country, but I hope that my remarks may not be useless to the labourers of other countries as well.

## 1

Every one who has eyes and a heart sees that you, working men, are obliged to pass your lives in want and in hard labour, which is useless to you, while other men, who do not work, enjoy all that you accomplish,—that you are the slaves of these men, and that this ought not to be.

But what should be done that this might not be?

The first, simplest, and most natural means which from

olden times has presented itself to men is by force to take from those who live by your labour what they enjoy illegally. Thus since remote antiquity acted the slaves in Rome and the peasants in the Middle Ages in Germany and in France. Thus they have frequently acted in Russia, since the time of Sténka Rázin, of Pugachév. Thus even now Russian labourers at times act.

This means suggests itself to the injured working men before any other, and yet this means not only never attains its end, but always more certainly makes worse, rather than improves, the condition of the working men. It was possible anciently, when the power of the government was not yet so strong as it is now, to hope for the success of such uprisings; but now, when in the hands of the government, which always protects those who do not work, are immense sums of money, and the railways, and the telegraphs, and the police, and the gendarmes, and the army, all such attempts end, as lately ended the uprisings in the Governments of Poltáva and of Khárkov, in the torture and execution of the rioters, and the power of the non-workers over the workers is only made more firm.

In trying to oppose violence to violence, you, working men, do what a man bound with ropes would do if, to free himself, he should tug at the ropes: he would only tighten the knots which fetter him. The same is true as regards your attempts by means of violence to take away what is withheld from you by means of violence.

## 2

It has now become obvious that the method of riots does not attain its purpose, and that it does not improve the condition of the working men, but rather makes it worse. And so of late, men who desire, or who at least say that they desire, the good of the working masses, have discovered a new means for the liberation of the working



*Tolstoy and his wife in the Crimea, March, 1903.*



men. This new means is based on the teaching that all the working men, after being deprived of the land which they formerly possessed, and after having become hired labourers (which according to this teaching is to happen as inevitably as the sunset at a given hour), will arrange unions, societies, demonstrations, and will choose their partisans for parliament, and thus will keep improving their condition, and finally will appropriate to themselves all the works and factories, in general all the implements of labour, among them the land, and then will be absolutely free and prosperous. In spite of the fact that this teaching, which proposes this means, is full of obscurities, arbitrary propositions and contradictions and simple absurdities, it has of late been disseminated more and more widely.

This doctrine is accepted not only in those countries where the majority of the population has for several generations fallen away from agricultural labour, but also where the majority of working men have not yet thought of abandoning the land.

It would seem that a doctrine which first of all demands the transition of the agricultural labourer from the customary, healthy, and joyous conditions of varied agricultural labour to the unhealthy, sombre, and pernicious conditions of monotonous, stultifying work, and from that independence, which the village worker feels in satisfying nearly all his needs, to the complete slavish dependence of the factory workman on his master, ought to have no success in countries where the labourers still live on the land and support themselves by means of agricultural labour. But the preaching of this modern doctrine, called socialism, even in such countries as Russia, where ninety-eight per cent. of the labouring population lives by means of agricultural labour, is gladly accepted by those two per cent. of working men who have fallen away from agricultural labour.

This is due to the fact that, when he abandons the labour on the land, the working man involuntarily submits to those temptations which are connected with life in the city and in the factory. The justification of these temptations he finds only in the socialistic doctrine, which considers the increase of necessities a sign of man's improvement.

Such working men, who have filled themselves with fragments of the socialistic doctrine, preach it with particular fervour to their fellow working men, considering themselves, in consequence of this propaganda and in consequence of those needs which they have developed, to be advanced people who stand infinitely higher than a coarse peasant, a village worker. Fortunately, there are still very few such working men in Russia; the vast majority of Russian labourers, which consists of agriculturists, has never heard anything about the socialistic doctrine; if these labourers ever heard of it, they receive such a doctrine as entirely alien to them and not touching upon their real needs.

All those socialistic methods of unions, demonstrations, election of partisans for the parliaments, by means of which the factory hands try to lighten their condition as slaves, present no interest for free agricultural labourers.

If the agricultural labourers need anything, it is not a raise of wages, not a diminution of hours of work, not general funds, and so forth, but only one thing, — land, of which they have everywhere too little to be able to support themselves upon it with their families. But of this one necessary thing for the rural labourers nothing is said in the socialistic doctrine.

### 3

All sensible Russian labourers understand that land, free land, is the only means for the improvement of their condition and for their liberation from slavery.



This is what a Russian peasant, a Stundist, writes regarding it to a friend of his:

“If a revolution is to be started, while the land remains private property, then, of course, it is not worth while to start it. Thus, for example, our brothers who live abroad, in Roumania, tell us that there they have a constitution and parliaments, but that the land is nearly all of it in the hands of proprietors; so what use is this parliament to the masses? In the parliament, they say, there is taking place only a struggle of one party against another, but the masses are terribly enslaved and in servitude to the proprietors. The proprietors have huts upon their lands. Half of the land they generally lease to the peasants, as a rule only for one year. When a peasant has worked the land well, the proprietor himself sows in this plot the next year, and allots another piece of ground to the peasant. After these poor wretches have lived for a few years on the land of a proprietor, they still remain his debtors; the government takes their last possessions for taxes, — their horse, cow, wagon, plough, clothes, bed, utensils, — and sells them all at a low price. Then the poor wretch picks up his starving family and goes to another proprietor, who seems to him to be kinder. This one gives him oxen, a plough, seeds, and so forth. But, after he has lived here for some time, the same story is repeated. Then he goes to a third proprietor, and so forth. Then the proprietors who do their own sowing hire labourers during the harvest, but it is their custom to pay the wages at the end of the harvest, and but few of the proprietors ever pay their hands, — the majority hold back half the pay, if not all. And there is no way of getting justice. So there you have a constitution! There you have a parliament!

“The land is the first indispensable condition which the masses should strive after. The factories and works, it seems to me, will naturally pass over into the hands

of the working men. When the peasants get land, they will work on it and live freely upon their labour. Then many will refuse to labour in the factories and works, consequently there will be less competition for the working men. Then the wages will rise, and they will be able to organize their circles and funds, and will be able themselves to compete with their masters; then the latter will not find it advantageous to have factories, and they will enter into agreements with the working men. Land is the chief object of the struggle. This ought to be explained to the working men. Even if they should obtain an increase in wages this would be only temporary, to allay their minds. Then again the conditions of life will change, if instead of one dissatisfied man ten others shall be waiting to take his place. How can they then ask for an increase of wages?"

Though the information given in the letter concerning the state of affairs in Roumania is not quite correct, and though in other countries these oppressions do not exist, the essence of the matter, which is, that the first condition for the improvement of the working men's condition is to be found in free land, is in this letter expressed with unusual clearness.

## 4

Land is the chief object of the struggle! so writes this unlearned peasant. But the learned socialists say that the chief object of the struggle is works, factories, and only lastly land. For the working men to get land they must, according to the doctrine of the socialists, first of all struggle against the capitalists for the possession of plants and factories, and only after they shall have taken possession of the plants and factories will they get possession of the land. Men need land, and they are told that for its possession they must first of all abandon it and then obtain it again by a complex process, as pre-

dicted by the socialistic prophets, together with unnecessary works and factories. This demand to get possession of works and factories, which are of no use to the agriculturists, in order to get possession of the land, reminds one of the methods used by certain usurers. You ask such a usurer for a thousand roubles in money, for you need only the money, but the usurer tells you: "I cannot give you just the one thousand roubles; take from me five thousand, four thousand of which will be in the form of a few tons of soap, of a few bolts of silk stuffs, and so forth, things which you do not need, and then I shall be able to give you the one thousand roubles in money which you need."

Even so the socialists, having quite irregularly decided that the land is just such an implement of labour as a plant or a factory, propose to the labourers who are suffering only from lack of land, that they go away from the land and busy themselves with taking possession of the factories which produce cannon, guns, soap, mirrors, ribbons, and all kinds of articles of luxury, and then only, after these labourers shall have learned quickly and rapidly to produce mirrors and ribbons, but shall have become unfit to work the land, take possession of the land also.

## 5

However strange it is to see a working man who has abandoned a life in the country amidst the freedom of the fields, meadows, and woods, and who ten years later, sometimes even after several generations, rejoices when he receives from his master a little house in the infected air with a twenty-foot garden in which he can plant a dozen cucumbers and two sunflowers, — such a joy is comprehensible.

The possibility of living on the land, of gaining one's sustenance from it by means of one's own labour, has always

been and always will be one of the chief conditions of a happy and independent human life. This all men have always known, and so all men have always striven and never stop striving and always will strive, like a fish for the water, at least for the semblance of such a life.

But the socialistic doctrine says that for the happiness of men they do not need such a life amidst plants and animals, with the possibility of satisfying nearly all their daily wants by means of their own agricultural labour, but a life in industrial centres with infected air, and with increasing and ever increasing demands, the gratification of which is possible only by means of senseless labour in the factories. And the working men who are enmeshed in the temptations of their factory lives believe this and use all their efforts in a miserable struggle with the capitalists for the sake of hours of labour and additional pennies, imagining that they are doing some very important work, whereas the only important work, for which those working men who have been torn away from the land ought to use all their forces, should consist in finding a means of returning to a life amidst Nature and to agricultural labour. "But," say the socialists, "even if it were true that a life amidst Nature is better than a life in a factory, there are now so many factory workmen, and these men have abandoned agricultural life so long ago, that their return to life on the land is now impossible. It is impossible because such a transition will without any necessity diminish the productions of the manufacturing industries, which form the wealth of the country. Besides, even if this were not so, there is not enough free land for the settlement and sustenance of all factory workmen."

It is not true that the working men's resettlement of the land will diminish the wealth of the country, because life on the land does not exclude the possibility of the labourers' participation, for a part of their time, in manu-

facturing labour at home or even in factories. But if, in consequence of this resettlement, the manufacture of useless and injurious articles, which now are produced with great rapidity in the great manufacturing plants, shall be diminished, and the now usual overproduction of necessary articles shall come to an end, while the amount of corn, vegetables, fruit, domestic animals, shall be increased, this will in no way diminish the wealth of people, but will only increase it.

But that argument that there will not be enough land for the settlement and sustenance of all the working men in factories is untrue, because in the majority of countries, (to say nothing of Russia, where the land retained by the large landed proprietors would suffice for all the factory working men in Russia and in the whole of Europe), and even in such countries as England and Belgium, the land which belongs to the large landed proprietors would suffice for the sustenance of all working people, if only the cultivation of this land were to be carried to that stage of perfection which it can attain with the present perfection of the mechanical arts, or even to that degree of perfection to which it was carried thousands of years ago in China.

Let those who are interested in this question read Kropótkin's books, *La conquête du pain* and *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, and the very good book published by the *Posrédnik*, Popóv's *The Corn Garden*, and they will see how many times the productiveness of agriculture may still be increased with intensive cultivation, how many times the present number of men may be fed from the same plot of ground. The improved methods of cultivation will certainly be introduced by the small proprietors, if only they shall not be compelled, as they now are, to give all their income to the large landowners, from whom they rent the land and who have no need to increase the productiveness of the land from which they without any care derive a great income.

They say that there will not be enough free land for all working people, and so it is not worth while to worry about the land which is kept from them by the land-owners.

This reflection is as if an owner of a house were to say concerning a crowd standing in a storm and in the cold in front of an unoccupied house and asking him to be allowed to take shelter in it: "These people must not be let in, because anyway they cannot all of them be accommodated in it." Let in those who beg to be let in, and then we shall see, from the way they locate themselves, whether all can be accommodated, or only a part. And even if not all can be accommodated, why should not those be admitted who can find room?

The same is true of the land. Give the land which is kept back from the working men to those who ask for it, and then we shall see whether this land is sufficient or not.

Besides, the argument about the insufficiency of land for the working people, who now work in factories, is incorrect in its essence. If the factory population now feed on bread which they buy, there is no reason why, instead of buying the grain which is produced by others, they should not themselves work the land on which the grain is produced and on which they feed, no matter where this land may be, in India, Argentina, Australia, or Siberia.

Thus all the arguments about why the workmen in the factories should not and could not go back to the land have no foundation whatever; on the contrary, it is clear that such a change not only could not be injurious to the common welfare, but would even increase it and would certainly do away with those chronic famines in India, Russia, and other places which more obviously than anything else show the irregularity of the present distribution of land.

It is true, where the manufacturing industry is particularly developed, as in England, Belgium, and a few States in America, the life of the working people has to such an extent been corrupted that the return to the land presents itself as very difficult. But the difficulty of such a return of the working men to an agricultural life by no means excludes the possibility of realizing such a change. For it to take place it is necessary for the working people first of all to understand that this change is indispensable for their good, and that they should find means for its realization, instead of accepting (as the socialistic doctrine now teaches them) their factory slavery as their eternal, immutable condition, which can be alleviated, but never destroyed.

Thus even the working men who have left the land and live by factory labour do not need unions, societies, strikes, childish processions with flags on the first of May, and so forth, but only this, — the finding of means for freeing themselves from their factory slavery and for settling on the land, the chief impediment to which is found in the seizure of the land by the owners who do not work it. This they should ask and demand of their rulers. And, in demanding this, they will not be demanding something not their own, not belonging to them, but the restitution of their most unquestionable and inalienable right, which is inherent in every animal, to live on the land and get their sustenance from it, without asking anybody else's permission to do so.

It is for this that the deputies of the working men ought to struggle in the parliaments; this ought to be preached by the press which stands on the side of the working men; for this the working men in the factories must prepare themselves.

Thus it is in the case of the labourers who have left the land. But for labourers, like the majority of the Russian labourers, ninety-eight per cent. of whom still live

on the land, the question consists only in this, how they may be able to improve their condition, without abandoning their land and surrendering themselves to the temptations of a factory life.

For this one thing is needed, — to turn over to the labourers the land which is now held by the large landowners.

Talk in Russia with any peasant you meet, who is working in town, ask why he is not faring well, and he will invariably answer one and the same thing: "I have no land, nothing to put my hands to."

And here, in Russia, where the whole nation raises an unabated cry on account of the insufficiency of land, men who think that they are serving the masses do not preach to them about means for returning to them the land which has been taken away from them, but about methods for struggling in the factories with the capitalists.

"But should *all* men live in the country and busy themselves with agriculture?" will say people who are to such an extent accustomed to the unnatural life of the men of the present time that this presents itself to them as rather strange and impossible. But why should not *all* men live in the country and busy themselves with agriculture? However, if people shall be found with such strange tastes as to prefer the factory slavery to the life in the country, nothing will keep them from doing so. The only point is that every man should have a chance to live in human fashion. When we say that it is desirable that every man should have a family, we do not say that every man should get married and have children, but only, that we do not approve of a structure of society in which a man cannot have the chance to do so.

## 6

Even during the time of serfdom, the peasants used to say to their masters, "We are yours, but the land is ours,"



that is, they recognized that, no matter how illegal and cruel the possession of one man by another was, the right of a man to own land without working it was even more illegal and cruel. It is true, of late a few of the Russian peasants, imitating the landowners, have begun to buy land and to deal in it, considering the ownership of it to be legal, no longer afraid that it will be taken from them. But thus act only a few frivolous peasants who are blinded by greed. The majority, all the real Russian agriculturists, believe firmly that the land cannot and must not be the property of those who do not work it, and that, although now the land is taken away from the workers by those who do not work it, the time will come when it shall be taken away from those who now own it and shall become, as it ought to be, a common possession. And the Russian peasants are quite right in believing that this is so and should be so. The time has come when the injustice, irrationality, and cruelty of the ownership of land by those who do not work it has become as obvious as fifty years ago were obvious the injustice, irrationality, and cruelty of the ownership of serfs. Either because the other methods of oppression have been destroyed, or because the number of people has increased, or because men have become more enlightened, all (both those who own land and those who are deprived of it) see clearly what they did not see before, that if a peasant who has worked all his life has not enough grain, because he has no ground on which to sow it, if he has no milk for the children and for the old, because he has no pasture, if he has not a rod of timber with which to mend his rotten cabin and keep it warm, while the neighbouring landowner, who does no work, lives on an immense estate, feeding milk to his puppies, building arbours and stables with plate-glass windows, raising sheep and establishing forests and parks on tens of thousands of desyatínas of land, spending in food in a week

what would keep a famished neighbouring village alive for a whole year, — such a structure of life should not exist. The injustice, irrationality, and cruelty of such a state of affairs now startles everybody, just as formerly men were startled by the injustice, irrationality, and cruelty of serfdom. And as soon as the injustice, irrationality, and cruelty of any structure become clear to men, this structure will in one way or another come to an end. Thus ended serfdom, and thus very soon landed property will come to an end.

## 7

Landed property must inevitably be destroyed, because the injustice, irrationality, and cruelty of this institution have become too obvious. The only question is how it will be abolished. Serfdom and slavery, not only in Russia, but also in all other countries, have been abolished by order of the governments. And it would seem that the ownership of land could be abolished by a similar order. But it is not likely that such an order can or will ever be promulgated by a government.

All governments are composed of men who live by other people's labour, and it is the ownership of land that more than anything else makes it possible to lead such a life. It is not the rulers and the large landed proprietors alone who will not permit the abolition of landed property: men who have nothing in common with the government or with the ownership of land, officials, artists, scholars, merchants, who serve the rich, feeling instinctively that their advantageous position is connected with the ownership of land, either always defend the ownership of land, or, attacking everything which is less important, never touch the question of the ownership of land.

A striking illustration of such a relation to the question

on the part of the men of the wealthy classes may be found in the change that has taken place in the views of the famous Herbert Spencer concerning the ownership of land. So long as Herbert Spencer was a young beginner, who had no ties with the rich and the rulers, he looked upon the question of the ownership of land as every man who is not tied by any preconceived notions must look upon it: he rejected it in the most radical manner and proved its injustice. But decades passed, Herbert Spencer from an unknown young man became a famous writer, who established relations with rulers and large landed proprietors, and he to such an extent modified his views upon the ownership of land that he tried to destroy all those editions in which he had so forcibly expressed the correct ideas about the illegality of landed property.

Thus the majority of well-to-do people feel instinctively, if not consciously, that their advantageous position depends on the ownership of the land. To this is due the fact that the parliaments in their pretended cares for the good of the masses propose, discuss, and adopt the most varied measures which are to improve the condition of the masses, but not the one which alone really improves the condition of the masses and is indispensable to them, — the abolition of the ownership of land.

Thus, to solve the question about the ownership of the land, it is necessary first of all to destroy the consciously concordant silence which has established itself in regard to this question. Thus it is in those countries where part of the power is in the parliaments. But in Russia, where the whole power is in the hands of the Tsar, the provision for the abolition of the ownership of land is still less possible. In Russia the power is only nominally in the hands of the Tsar; in reality it is in the hands of a few hundreds of fortuitous men, relatives and near friends of the Tsar, who compel him to do what pleases them.

Now all these men own immense tracts of land, and so they will never allow the Tsar, even if he should wish to do so, to free the land from the power of the landed proprietors. No matter how hard it was for the Tsar who liberated the peasants to compel his retainers to give up the right of serfdom, he was able to do so, because these retainers did not give up the land. But in giving up the land, the retainers and the relatives of the Tsar know that they lose their last chance of living as they have been accustomed to live.

Thus it is absolutely impossible to expect the emancipation of the land from the government in general, and in Russia from the Tsar.

It is impossible by means of violence to take away the land which is retained by the landed proprietors, because the strength has always been and will always be on the side of those who have already seized the power. It is quite senseless to wait for the emancipation of the land to be achieved in the manner proposed by the socialists, that is, to be prepared to give up the conditions of a good life for the very worst in expectation of the sweet by and by.

Every rational man sees that this method not only does not emancipate, but more and more makes the working men the slaves of their masters, and prepares them for slavery in the future in relation to those managers who will have charge of the new order. It is still more senseless to wait for the abolition of the ownership of land from a representative government or from the Tsar, as the Russian peasants have been waiting for it for the last two reigns, because all the retainers of the Tsar and the Tsar himself own immense tracts of land, and, though they pretend to be interested in the welfare of the peasants, never will give them the one thing which they need, — the land, — because they know that without the ownership of the land they will be deprived of their ad-

vantageous position as idle men who enjoy the labours of the masses.

What, then, are the working men to do in order to free themselves from the oppression in which they are?

## 8

At first it seems that there is nothing to be done, and that the working men are so fettered that they have no possibility whatever of freeing themselves. But that only seems so. The working men need only ponder on the causes of their enslavement, to see that, besides riots, besides socialism, and besides the vain hopes in the governments, and in Russia in the Tsar, they have a means for freeing themselves, such as no one and nothing can interfere with and as always has been and even now is in their hands.

Indeed, there is but one cause for the wretched condition of the working men, — it is this, that the landed proprietors own the land which the working men need. But what is it that gives the proprietors the possibility of owning this land?

In the first place, this, that in case the working men attempt to make use of this land they send for troops, which will disperse, beat, and kill those working men who have seized the land, and will return it to the land-owners. Now these troops are composed of you, the working men. Thus you yourselves, the working men, by becoming soldiers and obeying the military authorities, make it possible for the landed proprietors to own their land, which ought to belong to you. (That a Christian cannot be a soldier, that is, that he cannot promise to kill his like, and must refuse to use weapons, I have written about many times, among others in a pamphlet, *The Soldiers' Memento*, where I tried to prove from the Gospel why every Christian should do so.)

But, besides your making it possible, by your participation in the army, for the proprietors to own the land which belongs to all men, consequently also to you, you also give this possibility to the proprietors by working on the proprietors' lands and by renting them. You, the labourers, need only stop doing so, and the ownership of the land will not only become useless for the proprietors, but also impossible, and their land will become common property. No matter how much the landed proprietors may try to substitute machines for labourers, and instead of agriculture to introduce cattle-raising and forestry, they none the less cannot get along without labourers, and they will one after another and willy-nilly give up their lands.

Thus the means for freeing you, the working men, from your enslavement consists only in this, that, having come to understand that the ownership of land is a crime, you must not take part in it, either as soldiers, who take the land away from the workers, or as labourers on the lands of the proprietors, or as tenants on these lands.

## 9

“But the means of non-participation, both in the army and in the work on the lands of the proprietors, as also in the hiring of lands, would be effective,” I shall be told, “only in case all the working people of the world struck and refused to take part in the crimes, to work on the estates of the proprietors, and to rent land, and this is not the case and never can be the case. Even if a part of the working men should agree to abstain from participating in the army and from working on the land of the proprietors and renting it, the other working people, frequently the working people of other nationalities, will not find such a restraint necessary, and the ownership of the land by the proprietors will not be impaired. Thus the working people who will refuse to take part in the

ownership of the land will only be deprived of their advantages in vain, without alleviating the condition of all." This retort is quite just, if it is a question of a strike. But what I propose is not a strike. I do not propose a strike, but that the working people shall refuse to take part in the army, which exercises violence against their brothers, and in working on the lands of the proprietors, in renting them, not because this is unprofitable for the labourers and produces their enslavement, but because this participation is a bad thing, from which any good man must abstain, just as he must abstain, not only from every murder, theft, robbery, and so forth, but also from participation in these acts. That the participation in the lawlessness of the ownership of land and its support are bad things there can be no doubt, if the working men will only ponder on the whole meaning of this their participation in the ownership of the land by the non-workers. To support the proprietors' ownership of the land means to be the cause of the privations and sufferings of thousands of people, of old men and children, who are insufficiently fed, and who work above their strength, and who die before their time, only because they do not get the land which has been seized by the proprietors.

If such are the consequences of the ownership of land by the proprietors,—and it is obvious to any one that they are such,—it is also clear that participation in the ownership of land by the proprietors and in its maintenance is a bad thing from which every man must abstain. Hundreds of millions of men without any strike consider usury, debauchery, violence against the weak, theft, murder, and many other things to be evil, and abstain from these acts. The working men ought to do the same in respect to the ownership of land. They themselves see the whole lawlessness of such ownership and consider it a bad, cruel business. So why do they not only take part in it, but even support it?

## 10

Thus I do not propose a strike, but a clear consciousness of the criminality, the sinfulness of the participation in the ownership of land, and, in consequence of this consciousness, the abstaining from such a participation. It is true, such an abstinence does not, like a strike, at once unite all interested people in one decision and so cannot give those results, defined in advance, which are obtained by a strike, if it is successful; but, on the other hand, such an abstinence produces a much more lasting and continuous union than the one produced by a strike. The artificial union of men which arises at a strike comes to an end the moment the aim of the strike is attained; but the union, from a concordant activity or from abstinence in consequence of an identical consciousness, not only never comes to an end, but constantly grows stronger, attracting an ever increasing number of men. Thus it can and must be in the case of the working men's abstaining from taking part in the ownership of land, not in consequence of a strike, but in consequence of the consciousness of the sinfulness of this participation. It is very likely that, when the working men shall understand the lawlessness of participation in the proprietors' ownership of land, not all of them, but only a small part, will abstain from working on the proprietors' lands and from renting them; but since they will not abstain in consequence of an agreement, which has a local and a temporary significance, but from the consciousness of what is right and wrong, which is always and for all men equally binding, it will be natural for the number of working men, who will be shown by word and by example, both the illegality of the ownership of land and those consequences which arise from this illegality, to be constantly increasing.

It is absolutely impossible to foresee what change in



the structure of society will actually be produced by the working men's recognition that participation in the ownership of land is bad, but there is no doubt that these changes will take place and that they will be the more significant, the more this consciousness shall be diffused. These changes may consist in this, that at least a part of the working men will refuse to work for the proprietors and to rent land from them, and the landowners, no longer finding the ownership of land to be profitable, will either enter into arrangements with the working men which will be advantageous for them, or else will entirely give up the ownership of land. It is also possible that the working men who are enlisted in the army, having come to comprehend the illegality of the ownership of land, will more and more frequently refuse to take part in acts of violence against their brothers, the agricultural labourers, and the government will be compelled to abandon the protection of the proprietors' landed property, and the land of the proprietors will become free.

Finally, it may be that the government, having come to see the inevitableness of the emancipation of the land, will find it necessary to forestall the victory of the working men by lending it the aspect of its own decree, and will by law abolish the ownership of land.

The changes which can and must take place in the ownership of land, in consequence of the working men's recognition of the illegality of participation in the ownership of land, may be very varied, and it is difficult to foresee of precisely what character they will be, but one thing is unquestionable, and that is, that not one sincere effort of a man to act in this matter in godly fashion or in accordance with his conscience will be lost.

"What can I alone do against all?" people frequently say, when they are confronted with an act which is not countenanced by the majority. To these people it seems that for the success of a thing there must be *all*, or at

least *many*; but there must be many only for a bad thing. For a good thing it is enough if there be one, because God is always with him who does a good thing. And with whom God is, sooner or later all men will be.

In any case, all the improvements in the condition of the working men will take place only because they will themselves act more in conformity with God's will, more according to their conscience, that is, more morally, than they have acted before.

## 11

Working men have tried to free themselves by means of violence, of riots, and they have not attained their end. They have tried to free themselves by socialistic methods through unions, strikes, demonstrations, elections to parliaments, but all this at best only for a time alleviates the convict labour of the slaves, and not only does not free them, but even confirms the slavery.

The working men have tried, each one separately, to free themselves by supporting the illegality of the ownership of land, which they themselves condemn, and if the condition of a few, and that, too, not always and but for a brief time, is improved by such a participation in an evil thing, the condition of all only gets worse from it. This is due to the fact that what permanently improves the condition of men (not of one man, but of a society of men) is the activity which is in conformity with the rule that we should do unto others as we wish that others should do unto us. But all the three means which so far have been employed by the working men have not been in conformity with the rule about doing unto others as we wish that others should do unto us.

The means of the riots, that is, of the employment of violence against men who consider the land which they have received as an inheritance or have purchased with their savings to be their property, is inconsistent with the

rule about doing unto others as we wish that others should do unto us, because not one man who takes part in the riots would like to have taken from him what he considers to be his own, the more so, since such a seizure is generally accompanied by cruel acts of violence.

Not less inconsistent with the rule about doing unto others as we wish that others should do unto us is the whole socialistic activity. It is inconsistent with this rule, in the first place, because, by putting at its basis class strife, it provokes in the working men such hostile feelings toward the masters and the non-workers in general, as on the part of the masters can in no way be desirable for the working men. It is inconsistent with this rule for this reason, also, that in the strikes the working men are very frequently, for the success of their undertaking, brought to the necessity of using violence against those working men, of their own nation or foreigners, who wish to take their places.

Similarly inconsistent with the rule about doing unto others what we wish that others should do unto us, and even outright immoral, is the doctrine which promises to the working men the transference of all the implements of labour, of the factories and works, into their full possession. Every factory is the product of the labour, not only of many working men of the present, those who have built the factory and have prepared the material for its construction, and then of the men since its construction, but also of a vast number of mental and manual working men of former generations, without whose work no factory could exist. There is absolutely no possibility of figuring out the part of all men in the working of a factory, and so, according to the doctrine of the socialists themselves, every factory, like the land, is the common possession of the whole people, with this one difference, that the ownership of land can be abolished at once, without waiting for the socialization of all the implements of labour; but a

factory can become the legal possession of the people only when the unrealizable fancy of the socialists shall be achieved, — the socialization of all, literally all, the implements of labour, — and not as is proposed by the majority of working socialists, when they shall have seized the factories of their masters and shall have made them their own. A master has no right whatever to own a factory, but just as little right have the working men to any factory whatever, so long as the unrealizable socialization of the implements of labour is not an accomplished fact.

For this reason I say that the doctrine which promises to the working men the seizure of those factories in which they work, previous to the socialization of all the implements of labour, as is generally proposed, is not only a doctrine which is contrary to the golden rule of doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us, but even downright immoral.

Similarly inconsistent with the rule about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us is the working men's support of the ownership of land, be it by means of violence in the form of soldiers, or in the form of labourers or tenants on the land. Such a support of the ownership of land is inconsistent, because, if such acts for a time improve the condition of those persons who perform them, they certainly make the condition of other working men worse.

Thus all the means which have heretofore been used by the working men for the purpose of their liberation, such as direct violence and the socialistic activity, as well as the acts of separate individuals who for the sake of their advantage maintain the illegality of the ownership of land, have not attained their purpose, because they have all been inconsistent with the rule of morality about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us.

What will free the working men from their slavery is

not even an activity, but the mere abstinence from sin, because such abstinence is just and moral, that is, in conformity with God's will.

## 12

"But want!" I shall be told. No matter how convinced a man may be of the illegality of the ownership of land, it is hard for him, if he is a soldier, to keep from going whither he is sent, and from working for the proprietors, if this work may give milk for his starving children. Or how can a peasant abstain from renting the proprietor's land, when he has but half a desyatína to each soul and knows that he cannot support his family on the land which he owns? It is true, this is very hard, but the same difficulty is met with in refraining from any bad thing. And yet men for the most part abstain from anything bad. Here the abstinence is less difficult than in the majority of bad acts, but the harm from the bad act—the participation in the seizure of land—is more obvious than in many bad acts from which people refrain. I am not speaking of the refusal to participate in the army, when the troops are sent out against the peasants. It is true, for such a refusal it takes more than ordinary courage and a readiness to sacrifice oneself, and so not everybody is able to do so, but, on the other hand, the cases when this refusal is to be applied are rarely met with. But it takes much less effort and sacrifice not to work on the proprietors' lands and not to rent them. If all working men fully comprehended that working for the proprietors and renting their lands are bad, there would be fewer and fewer people ready to work on the proprietors' lands and to rent them. Millions of people live without having any need of the proprietors' lands, busying themselves at home with some trade or attending to all kinds of industries away from home. Nor do those hundreds of thou-

sands and millions of peasants feel any need of the proprietors' lands, who, in spite of the whole difficulty of this matter, leave their old places and go to new places, where they get all the land they wish and where they for the most part do not suffer, but even grow rich, soon forgetting the want which drove them out. Even those peasants and good farmers live without working for the proprietors or renting their lands, who, though having but little land to till, live abstemiously and work their land well and so are not in need of any work for the proprietors or of renting their lands. Other thousands live without having any need of working on the proprietors' lands and of renting them,—the men who live a Christian life, that is, living, not each for himself, but aiding one another, as live in Russia many Christian Communes, of whom the Dukhobors are especially known to me.

There can be want only in a society of men who live according to the animal law of struggling against one another, but among Christian societies there ought to be no want. As soon as men divide among themselves what they have, everybody always has what he needs, and much is still left. When the people who heard Christ's sermon grew faint with hunger, Christ, upon learning that some of them had provisions, commanded that all should sit down in a circle and that those who had the provisions should give them to their neighbours on one side, in order that the neighbours, having appeased their hunger, might hand them to those farther away. When the whole circle was made, all had their hunger appeased, and much was still left over.

Even so in the society of men who act similarly there can be no want, and such people do not need to work for the proprietors or rent their lands. Thus want cannot always be a sufficient reason for doing what is harmful to one's brothers.

If the working people now go and work for the pro-

prietors and rent their lands, they do so only because not all of them have come to understand the sinfulness of their acts or the whole evil which they are doing to their brothers and to themselves by it. The more there shall be such men and the more clearly they shall understand the significance of their participation in the ownership of land, the more and more will the power of the non-workers over the workers destroy itself of its own accord.

## 13

The only sure, indubitable means for improving the condition of the working men, which, at the same time, is consistent with God's will, consists in the emancipation of the land from its seizure by the proprietors. This emancipation of the land is attained, not only through the working men's refusal to take part in the army, when the army is directed against the working people, but also by abstaining from working on the proprietors' lands and from renting them. But it is not enough for you, the working men, to know that for your good you need the liberation of the land from its seizure by the proprietors, and that this liberation is attained through your refraining from committing acts of violence against your brothers and from working on the lands of the proprietors and renting them; you must also know in advance how to manage the land when it shall be freed from seizure by the proprietors, how to distribute it among the workers.

The majority of you generally think that all that is necessary is to take the land away from the non-workers, and all will be well. But that is not so. It is easy to say: "Take the land away from the non-workers and give it to those who work it." But how is this to be done, without violating justice and without giving the rich again a chance to accumulate great extents of territory and

thus again to rule over the workers? To leave it, as some of you think, to each individual worker or society to mow or plough wherever it be, as was done anciently and is even now done among the Cossacks, is possible only where there are few people and there is much land and the land is all of one quality. But where there are more people than the land can support, and the land is of varying quality, it is necessary to find a different means for the exploitation of the land. To divide the land according to the number of men? But if the land is divided up according to the number of men, it will also come into the hands of those who do not know how to work it, and these non-workers will let it or sell it to the rich purchasers, and there will again appear people who own large tracts of land and who do not till it. To prohibit the non-workers to sell or let the land? But then the land which belongs to a man who does not wish or is unable to work it will lie unused. Besides, in dividing the land up according to the number of men, how is it to be estimated according to its quality? There is black loam, fruitful land, and there is sandy, swampy, sterile land; there is land in the cities, which brings as much as one thousand and more roubles income from each *desyatina*, and there is land in the backwoods, which does not bring any income. How, then, is the land to be distributed in such a way that there may not again arise the ownership of land by those who do not work it, and that there may not be such as are improperly treated, that there may be no discussions, quarrels, civil wars? Men have for a long time been busy discussing and solving these questions. For the correct distribution of land among the workers many projects have been proposed.

To say nothing of the so-called communistic projects of the construction of society, in which the land is regarded a common possession and is worked by all men in common, I am acquainted also with the following



projects: The project of the Englishman, William Ogilvie, who lived in the eighteenth century. Ogilvie says that, since every man, in being born into this world, in consequence of this has the full right to be there and to live by what it produces, this right cannot be limited by some people's regarding great tracts of land as their property. For this reason everybody has the free right to own such a plot of land as falls to his share. But if a person owns a greater extent of land than falls to his share, exploiting those plots to which the men who have a right to them make no claim, the owner should pay the government a tax for this possession.

Another Englishman, Thomas Spence, a few years later solved the land question by recognizing the land to be the property of parishes which could dispose of it as they pleased. In this way the private possession of separate individuals was completely abolished.

As a beautiful illustration of Spence's view concerning the ownership of land may serve the account of what happened with him in the year 1788 at Haydon Bridge, which he calls a "Sylvan Joke."

"While I was in the wood alone by myself a-gathering of nuts, the forester popped through the bushes upon me, and, asking me what I did there, I replied, 'Gathering nuts.'"

"'Gathering nuts!' said he, 'and dare you say so?'"

"'Yes,' said I, 'why not? Would you question a monkey or a squirrel about such a business? And am I to be treated as an inferior to one of these creatures, or have I a less right? But who are you,' continued I, 'that thus take it upon you to interrupt me?'"

"'I'll let you know that,' said he, 'when I lay you fast for trespassing here.'"

"'Indeed,' answered I, 'but how can I trespass here where no man ever planted or cultivated; for these nuts are the spontaneous gift of Nature, ordained alike for the

sustenance of man and beast that choose to gather them, and, therefore, they are common.'

"'I tell you,' said he, 'this wood is not common. It belongs to the Duke of Portland.'

"'Oh! My service to the Duke of Portland,' said I. 'Nature knows no more of him than of me. Therefore, as in Nature's storehouse, the rule is "first come first served," so the Duke of Portland must look sharp if he wants any nuts.'

Spence, in conclusion, declared that if he were called upon to defend a country in which he durst not pluck a nut, he would throw down his musket, saying, "Let such as the Duke of Portland, who claim the country, fight for it!"

The question was similarly solved by the famous author of *Age of Reason* and *Rights of Man*, Thomas Paine. The peculiarity of this solution consisted in this, that in recognizing the land to be a common possession, he proposed to abolish the right of the ownership of land by separate individuals in that the possession of land could not be passed by inheritance, and the land, which was private property, at the death of the owner became the possession of the nation.

It was Patrick Edward Dove, in our century, who was the next, after Thomas Paine, to write and think about this subject. Dove's theory consists in this, that the value of the land is due to two sources, — to the property of the land itself and to the work put into it. The value of the land due to the work which is put into it may be the possession of private individuals; but the value of the land which is due to its properties is the possession of the whole nation and so can never belong to separate individuals, as it is now supposed to be, but must be the common possession of the whole nation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This information is taken by me from a beautiful English book by a modern writer, John Morrison Davidson, *Precursors of Henry George*. — *Author's Note*.

Such also is the project of the Japanese Land Reclaiming Society, the essence of which consists in this, that every man has the right to own as much land as is apportioned to him, on condition of paying for it an established tax, and so has the right to demand the allotment to him of his share of land by him who has more than the share allotted to each person. But the best, justest, and most applicable project, in my opinion, is the one by Henry George, which is called the Single Tax.

## 14

I personally consider Henry George's project the justest, most beneficent, and, above all, most easily applied of all the projects of which I know anything. This project may on a small scale be imagined as follows: let us imagine that in some locality the whole land belongs to two proprietors, one, very rich, who lives abroad, and the other, who is not well off and who lives and farms at home, and to a hundred peasants, who own small tracts. Besides, this locality is inhabited by a few dozen landless men, who serve and live in rented houses, — artisans, traders, officials. Let us assume that all the inhabitants of this locality, having come to the conclusion that the whole land is a common possession, have decided in conformity with this conviction to manage the land.

What shall they do?

It is impossible to take the land away from those who own it and to allow anybody to use the land he likes, since there will be several candidates to the same tract, and there will be endless dissensions. It is inconvenient for all to unite into one coöperative society and to plough, mow, and harvest in common, and then to divide up, because some have ploughs, horses, carts, while others do not have them, and, besides, some of the inhabitants do not know how to till the land, and have not the

strength to do so. So, too, it is very difficult to divide the land according to the number of persons into such holdings as by their quality would be equal among themselves. If for this the whole land is divided up into small plots of various quality, so that each should get a plot of the best, and one of mediocre, and one of bad land, and one of field, and mowing, and woodland, there will be too many such tiny plots.

Besides, such a division is dangerous, because those who do not wish to work or who are in great need will for money turn over their land to the rich, and large landed proprietors will again come into existence.

And so the inhabitants of the locality decide to leave the land in the hands of those who now own it, but oblige each owner to pay into the common treasury an amount of money which represents the income which (according to the valuation of the land, not according to the labour put into it, but according to its quality and location) the owners derive from the land in use by them, and this money they decide to divide into equal parts. But since such a collection of money from all the owners of the land and its subsequent equal distribution among the inhabitants is troublesome, and since, besides, all the inhabitants pay out money for common needs, — schools, churches, fire departments, shepherds, mending of roads, and so forth, and such money for public purposes is always insufficient, the inhabitants of the locality decide, instead of collecting the income from the land and distributing it to all and again collecting a part of it for taxes, to collect and use the whole income from the land on common necessities. Having established themselves in this manner, the inhabitants of the locality demand from the proprietors a fixed payment for the land in their possession, as also from the peasants who own small holdings; but nothing is demanded from the few dozen men who do not own any land, they being permitted to use

gratis all that which is supported from the income on the land.

This arrangement has the effect of making it unprofitable for the proprietor who does not live in the country, and who produces little on his land, under the land tax, to continue holding his land, and he gives it up. But the other proprietor, who is a good farmer, gives up only a part of his land, and retains only that part of it on which he can produce more than what is demanded of him for the land cultivated by him.

But those of the peasants who own small tracts, and who have many workers, but little land, as also some who have no land, but wish to support themselves by means of work on the land, take up the land which is given up by the proprietors. Thus, with such a solution, all the inhabitants of this locality find it possible to live on the land and to support themselves from it, and the whole land passes over into the hands or remains in the hands of those who like to till it and are able to produce much on it. But the public institutions of the inhabitants of the locality improve, since more money is obtained for public needs than before, and, above all else, all this transference of landed property takes place without any disputes, quarrels, interference, or violence, but by the voluntary abandonment of the land by those who do not know how to cultivate it profitably.

Such is Henry George's project in its application to the separate state or even to all humanity. This project is just and beneficent, and, above all, easily applied everywhere, in all societies, no matter what order of agriculture may be established there.

For this reason I personally consider this project to be the best of all those in existence. But this is my personal opinion, which may be faulty. But you, the working men, will, when the time shall come to attend to the land, discuss for yourselves these and all other projects, and

will choose the one which you will consider the best, or you will yourselves discover a juster or more applicable one. The reason I have explained these projects more in detail is, that you, working men, understanding on the one hand the whole injustice of the ownership of land, and, on the other, the whole difficulty and complexity of a just distribution of the land, may not fall into those errors of a thoughtless distribution of the land, which would make your condition, in consequence of the struggle for the land by separate individuals and of land seizures in the new order, worse than what it is at present.

## 15

I shall briefly repeat the essence of what I wanted to say to you. The essence of what I wanted to say to you is this, that I advise you, the working men, in the first place, to understand clearly what it is you need, and not to labour to obtain what is absolutely unnecessary for you; you need but this one thing,—free land, on which you may be able to live and support yourselves.

In the second place, I advise you to understand clearly in what way you may be able to obtain the land you need. You can obtain the land, not through riots, from which God save you, not through demonstrations, nor strikes, nor socialistic deputies in parliaments, but only through non-participation in what you yourselves consider to be bad, that is, by not supporting the illegality of the ownership of land, either by means of violence exerted by the army, or by working on the proprietors' lands and renting them.

In the third place, I advise you to consider in advance how you will distribute the land when it becomes free.

For you to be able correctly to consider this, you must not think that the land which will be abandoned by the proprietors will become your property, but must under-

stand that, for the use of the land to be regularly and without bias apportioned among all men, the right to own land, though it be but one square rod, should not be acknowledged in the case of any one. Only by recognizing the land as just such an article of common possession as the sun and air will you be able, without bias and justly, to establish the ownership of land among all men, according to any of the existing projects or according to some new project composed or chosen by you in common.

In the fourth place, and this is most important, I advise you, for the purpose of obtaining everything you need, to direct your forces, not to a struggle with the ruling classes by means of revolts, revolutions, or socialistic propaganda, but only to yourselves, to how you may live better.

People fare badly only because they themselves live badly. And there is no more injurious thought for people than that the causes of the wretchedness of their position is not in themselves, but in external conditions. A man or a society of men need but imagine that the evil experienced by them is due to external conditions and to direct their attention and efforts to the change of these external conditions, and the evil will be increased. But a man or a society of men need but sincerely direct their attention to themselves, and in themselves and their lives look for the causes of that evil from which they suffer, in order that these causes may be at once found and destroyed.

"Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." This is the fundamental law of human life. If you live badly, contrary to God's law, no efforts of yours will procure for you the well-being for which you are seeking. If you live well, morally well, in accordance with God's will and making no efforts for the attainment of this well-being, it

will naturally establish itself among you, and at that in a way you have never thought of.

It seems so natural and simple to push against the door behind which is that which we need, and the more natural, since back of us stands a crowd that is pressing against us and jamming us against the door. However, the more stubbornly we press against the door behind which is that which we consider a good, the less hope there is to penetrate through it. The door opens toward us.

Thus, to obtain the good, a man must not trouble himself about the change of external conditions, but only about changing himself: he must stop doing what is evil, if he is doing it, and must begin to do good, if he is not doing it. All the doors which lead men to the true good open only outwardly.

We say, the working people are enslaved by the government, by the rich; but who are these men who form the government and the wealthy classes? Are they heroes, each of whom can vanquish tens and hundreds of working people? Or are there very many of them, while there are but few working men? Or are these men, the rulers and the wealthy, the only ones who know how to make everything necessary and to produce everything the people live by? Neither the one, nor the other, nor the third. These men are no heroes, but, on the contrary, weakened, helpless people, and not only are they not numerous, but they are even hundreds of times fewer than the working people. And everything which men live by is produced not by them, but by the working men, while they are both unable and unwilling to do anything, and only devour what the working men produce. Why, then, does this small band of feeble, idle men, who cannot and will not do anything, rule over millions of working men? There is but one answer to this: it is due to the fact that the working men are



in their life guided by the same rules and laws by which their oppressors are guided. If the working men work and do not exploit the labours of the poor and the feeble to such an extent as do the non-working rulers and the wealthy, this is not due to the fact that they consider this bad, but because they cannot do it so well as the rulers and the rich, who are more agile and cunning than the rest. The rulers and the rich rule the working people only because the working people wish in precisely the same manner to rule their own fellows, the working men. For this same reason — the equal comprehension of life — the working men are unable successfully to rebel against their oppressors. No matter how hard it is for the working man to be oppressed by the rulers and the rich, he knows in his heart that he himself would act similarly toward his brothers, or that in a small way he is acting thus toward them. The working people have fettered themselves by their desire to enslave one another, and so it is easy for the shrewd people who have already got them in their power to enslave them. If the working people did not consist of enslavers exactly like the rulers and the rich, who are concerned only about exploiting their neighbour's want for the purpose of establishing their own well-being, but lived in a brotherly way, thinking of one another and mutually offering aid, no one would be able to enslave them. And so, to free themselves from the oppression in which they are held by the rulers and the rich, the working people have but one means, — to free themselves from those principles by which they are guided in their lives, that is, to stop serving mammon and begin serving God.

The pretended friends of the people tell you, and you yourselves — at least a few of you — say to yourselves, that the present order must be changed, that you must take possession of the implements of labour and of the land, and that you must overthrow the present govern-

ment and establish a new one. And you believe this, and you hope and work for the attainment of these ends. But let us assume that you will attain what you wish, that you will overthrow the present government and will establish a new government, and that you will take possession of all the factories, works, and the land. Why do you assume that the people who will form the new government will be guided by new principles different from those by which the present men are guided? And if they shall be guided by the same principles, they will, like those of the present, not only retain, but also strengthen their power, and will for their advantage extract as much from their power as they can. Why do you assume that the people who will have charge of the factories, of the land (all men cannot manage all institutions), being people with just such views as the men of the present, will not find, as at present, means for seizing the lion share, leaving to the humble and meek only what is indispensable. I shall be told: "It will be so arranged that it will be impossible to do so." But see how well all was arranged by God Himself, or by Nature, — the ownership of the earth by all who are born and live upon it, — and yet people have been cunning enough to violate this divine arrangement. And so thousands of means for distorting the human order will always be discovered by those men who in their lives are guided by nothing but care for their personal well-being. No modifications of the external order will ever improve or ever can improve the condition of men. And so my fourth and most important advice to you, working men, consists in this, that, without condemning other people, your oppressors, you should direct your attention to yourselves and change your inner lives.

If you think that it is lawful and useful forcibly to take away and appropriate to yourselves what has been taken from you and is retained by force; or, if you think

that, following the teaching of erring men, it is lawful and useful to take part in the struggle of the classes and to strive after the acquisition of the implements of labour created by others; if you think that, serving as soldiers, you are obliged to obey the authorities, who compel you to offer violence to your brothers and kill them, and not to obey God, who commands you not to do so; or if you think that, in maintaining the lawlessness of the ownership of land by your work on the lands of the proprietors and by renting them, you are not doing anything wrong, — your condition will become worse and worse, and you will for ever remain slaves.

But if you come to understand that for your true good you need only live a brotherly life according to God's law, doing unto others what you wish should be done to you, — then in the measure in which you will understand this and, understanding this, will execute it, will also that good be realized which you wish for, and your slavery be destroyed. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

*Yásnaya Polyána, September, 1902.*



# THE FIRST DISTILLER

1886



# THE FIRST DISTILLER

Or, How the Devil Earned a Crust of Bread <sup>1</sup>

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## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

PEASANT (*ploughing, looking up*). It is noon and time to unhitch. Whoa! Come now! You are tired, my dear. I'll make one more turn over there, will go down the last furrow, — and then to dinner. It was lucky I thought of taking a crust of bread with me. I won't go home. I'll have a bite near the well, and will take a nap, while the dun horse will nibble at some grass, — and then, back to work. God willing, I'll get through early.

### SCENE II.

LITTLE DEVIL (*running out from behind a bush*). What a good fellow! He is mentioning God all the time. Wait awhile, and you will mention the devil. I'll carry off his crust of bread. He'll find it gone and will be looking for it. He'll be hungry, and will swear, and will mention the devil. (*Takes the crust, goes with it behind a bush, and waits to see what the peasant will do.*)

<sup>1</sup> Dramatized version of the legend in Vol. XVII., p. 439.

PEASANT (*loosening the hame lugs*). The Lord be blessed! (*Leads out the horse and lets it loose; goes to his caftan.*) I am awfully hungry! The old woman gave me a big chunk, and I'm sure I'll eat it all. (*Goes up to the caftan.*) Gone! I must have covered it with my caftan. (*Lifts up his caftan.*) Not here, either. This is remarkable! (*Shakes his caftan.*)

LITTLE DEVIL (*behind the bush*). Look for it, look for it! Here it is! (*Sits down on it.*)

PEASANT (*lifts up the plough beam, and shakes the caftan*). Wonderful, truly wonderful. There was nobody here, and the crust is gone. If the birds had pecked it, there would be crumbs, but there are none. Nobody was here, and yet somebody carried it off.

LITTLE DEVIL (*rises and looks around*). He will mention me this very minute.

PEASANT. Well, it can't be helped. I sha'n't starve to death. Let him have it. May he eat it to his health!

LITTLE DEVIL (*spitting out*). Accursed peasant! He ought to be swearing, and he says, "To his health!" I can't do anything with him. (*The peasant lays himself down, makes the sign of the cross, yawns, and falls asleep.*)

LITTLE DEVIL (*comes out from behind the bush*). Talk to the chief! The chief keeps saying, "You do not bring me enough peasants to hell. Look there: merchants, gentlemen, and all other kinds come here every day and in large numbers, but there are but few peasants." How shall I get at him? I do not know how. What better could I have done? I took away his last crust. And still he did not swear. I do not know what to do now. I'll go and report. (*Sinks through the ground.*)



## ACT II.

*Hell.*

*In the main seat sits the Chief Devil. The Devils' Scribe sits below, at a table, with writing material. Guards stand at each side. On the right are five Little Devils of various descriptions; on the left, near the door, is the Doorkeeper; a Dandyish Devil is standing in front of the Chief.*

DANDYISH DEVIL. My whole booty for three years amounts to 220,005 men. They are all in my power now.

CHIEF. All right, thanks, move on! (*Dandyish Devil moves to the right.*)

CHIEF (*to Scribe*). I am tired. How much business is there left? From whom have we had reports, and who is still to be heard from?

SCRIBE (*counts on his fingers and, as he proceeds, points to the Little Devils standing on the right. Every time he names a Little Devil, the Little Devil bows*). I have a report from the Nobility Devil,—he took in altogether 1,836. From the Merchant Devil—9,643. From the Court Devil—3,423. From the Woman Devil we have just received 186,315 women and 17,438 girls. Two are left: the Pettifogger and Peasant Devils. In all 220,005.

CHIEF. Well, I see, we shall get through to-day. (*To Doorkeeper.*) Let them in! (*Enter Pettifogger Devil, bowing to the Chief.*)

CHIEF. Well, how is your business?

PETTIFOGGER DEVIL (*laughing all the time, and rubbing his hands*). My business is as white as soot. My booty is such as I do not remember since the creation of the world.

CHIEF. Well, did you take in a lot?

PETTIFOGGER DEVIL. It is not so much a question of numbers. Though the number is small,—in all 1,350 men,—they are all fine lads. They are such lads that they could pass for devils. They themselves trouble people worse than devils. I taught them a new fashion.

CHIEF. What new fashion?

PETTIFOGGER DEVIL. It is like this: formerly the pettifoggers were connected with the judges, and used to deceive people. Now I have taught them to get along without judges. They work for those who pay them most. And they work in such a way that they start cases where there is nothing to do. They trouble men much better than do the devils.

CHIEF. I'll see. Move on! (*Pettifogger Devil passes to the right.*)

CHIEF (*to Doorkeeper*). Let in the last!

(*Enter Peasant Devil with the crust, bowing low.*)

PEASANT DEVIL. I can't exist any longer,—give me another job!

CHIEF. What job? You are talking nonsense. Get up and talk sensibly. Make your report, and tell me how many peasants you have gathered in this week.

PEASANT DEVIL (*weeping*). Not one!

CHIEF. What? Not one? How so? What have you been doing? Where have you been loafing?

PEASANT DEVIL (*snivelling*). I have not loafed; I have worn myself out working, but have not accomplished anything. Here I stole the last crust from under a man's

nose, and he did not even swear, but wished me to eat it to my health.

CHIEF. What? What are you babbling there? Wipe your nose and talk sense, for I can't make out a thing you say.

PEASANT DEVIL. Well, a peasant was ploughing, and I knew that all he had with him was a crust of bread and nothing else to eat. I stole the crust. He ought to have sworn, but what did he do? He said: "Let him who took it eat it to his health." I have brought the crust with me, — here it is!

CHIEF. Well, and how about the others?

PEASANT DEVIL. They are all alike, — I did not get one.

CHIEF. How dare you come back to me with empty hands? And there you have brought a stinking crust with you; do you mean to make fun of me? Eh? Do you intend to eat bread in hell for nothing? The others try and work hard. Now, these here (*pointing to the Devils*) have brought with them a thousand and twenty thousand apiece, and this one has brought as high as two hundred thousand. And you come back empty-handed, and bring with you a crust or something like it. Tell me no fairy-tales! You loaf, and do not work. That's why they get away from you. Wait, friend, — I'll teach you!

PEASANT DEVIL. Don't have me punished, but let me talk! These devils have an easy time of it: they deal with noblemen, or merchants, or women. We know what that means. Show a nobleman a sable cap or an estate, and straightway you have him, and lead him whither you will. The same with a merchant. Show him money and fire him with envy, and you may lead him as by a halter, — he will not get away. And so it is with women. Dresses and sweetmeats, — and again do with them as you please. But just try it with a peasant. He works from morn-

ing until night, and even into the night, and does not begin anything without God,—so how will you get in with him? Father, free me from the peasants,—they have worn me out! I have even angered you.

CHIEF. You lie, good-for-nothing! Don't point to others. They get the merchants, and noblemen, and women, because they know how to treat them,—they keep inventing new things. Now, the pettifogger has turned a new leaf. Invent something yourself. The idea of boasting of having stolen a crust! How clever! Throw nets over them, and they will fall into one of them. But you have been loafing, and so you have given your peasants a chance to gather strength. They do not even regret the loss of a crust. If they are up to such tricks, and teach them to their women, they will entirely get away from us. Think out something! Stretch yourself the best way you can!

PEASANT DEVIL. I do not know what to think out. Relieve me. I can't stand it.

CHIEF (*angrily*). You can't? Well, do you want me to work for you?

PEASANT DEVIL. I can't.

CHIEF. You can't? Just wait. Oh, there! Bring in rods, and wallop him! (*The guards seize the Devil and flog him.*)

PEASANT DEVIL. Oh, oh, oh!

CHIEF. Have you thought it out?

PEASANT DEVIL. Oh! Oh! I can't think it out.

CHIEF. Wallop him! (*They flog him.*) Have you thought it out?

PEASANT DEVIL. I have, I have!

CHIEF. Well, tell me what you have thought out.

PEASANT DEVIL. I have thought out something by which I will get them all into my hands. Just let me hire out as a farm-hand with the peasant,—but I cannot tell you about it beforehand.

CHIEF. All right. Only remember: if you do not earn a crust in three years, I'll flay you alive.

PEASANT DEVIL. In three years they will all be mine.

CHIEF. All right. In three years I'll go and take a look myself.

## ACT III.

*Granary. Wagons with grain.*

### SCENE I.

DEVIL, *as* FARM-HAND (*filling measures with grain from the wagon, which measures Peasant carries away*).  
Seven.

PEASANT. How many chétverts ?

FARM-HAND (*looking at the marks on the door*). Twenty-six ; seventh measure on the twenty-seventh.

PEASANT. It won't all go in, — it's full already.

FARM-HAND. Spread it well.

PEASANT. I have done so. (*Carries off the measure.*)

### SCENE II.

FARM-HAND (*alone, takes off his cap, displaying his horns*). He won't come out soon, so I will straighten my horns a little. (*Horns straighten up.*) I'll take off my boots, — I can't do so when he is around. (*Takes his feet out of his boots, showing his hoofs. Sits down on the threshold.*) It's going on the third year. I have to settle soon. He can't store away all the grain. I must teach him the last trick. Then the Chief himself may come and see. There will be something to show. He will pay me for the crust. (*Neighbour comes up.*)

## SCENE III.

*Farm-hand hides his horns.*

NEIGHBOUR. Good morning!

FARM-HAND. Good morning!

NEIGHBOUR. Where is your master?

FARM-HAND. He has gone to spread the grain in the grain loft, — he can't get it all in.

NEIGHBOUR. What prosperity your master has, — he has even no place to store it all in. We are all marveling at the grain your master has raised these two years. It is as though somebody is helping him out. Last year was a dry year, and he sowed in the bog: other people did not get anything, and you had your granaries full. This year it rained a lot, and he had the sense to sow on the uplands. Other people's grain has all rotted, and you have more than you want. And what grain! (*Shakes it in his palm and tries it between his teeth.*)

## SCENE IV.

PEASANT (*returning with empty measure*). Good morning, friend!

NEIGHBOUR. Good morning! I am just talking with your hand about how you guessed where to sow. All the people are envying you. What a mass of grain you have garnered! You won't eat it up in ten years.

PEASANT. I owe it to Potáp. (*Points to the Farm-hand.*) It is his luck. I sent him out last year to plough, and he took it into his head to plough in the swamp. I scolded him, but he persuaded me to sow there. So we did, and it came out for the best. This year he guessed it again, and sowed on the uplands.

NEIGHBOUR. Yes, he knows exactly what kind of a year it is going to be. Yes, you have a lot of grain.

(*Silence.*) I have come to ask you for an eighth of rye. I am all out of it, — I'll give it back to you next summer.

PEASANT. Why, take it.

FARM-HAND (*nudging the Peasant*). Don't give it to him.

PEASANT. Stop talking! Take it!

NEIGHBOUR. I'll just run down for a bag.

FARM-HAND (*aside*). He won't give up his old habit, — he gives. He does not obey me in everything. Just give me a chance, — he will soon stop giving. (*Neighbour exit.*)

#### SCENE V.

PEASANT (*sitting down on the threshold*). Why should I not give to a good man?

FARM-HAND. It's easy enough to give, but you will not get it back. To loan is the same as throwing down-hill, and to collect the debt — the same as pulling up-hill. Thus old men say.

PEASANT. Don't worry, — there is grain enough.

FARM-HAND. What of it, if there is enough?

PEASANT. There is not only enough until the next crop, but even for two years. What shall I do with it?

FARM-HAND. What shall you do with it? Why, I will make something so good out of this grain that you will rejoice your whole life.

PEASANT. What will you make of it?

FARM-HAND. I will make a drink, such that, if you have no strength, it will give you strength, and if you want to eat, it will fill you up. If you can't fall asleep, you will fall asleep at once; if you are sad, it will cheer you up. If you have lost courage, it will give you courage. That's the kind of a drink I will give you.

PEASANT. You are fibbing.

FARM-HAND. Fibbing! You did not believe me even



when I told you to sow grain, at first in the swamp, and later on the uplands. Now you know it was right. And you will know so about the drink.

PEASANT. What will you make it of?

FARM-HAND. Why, of this same grain.

PEASANT. Will it not be a sin?

FARM-HAND. I declare, a sin! Everything is given to man for a joy.

PEASANT. Where have you, Potáp, learned so much? As I look at you, you are not a wise man, but a labourer. You have been living with me these two years, and have never taken off your clothes. How have you come to all this wisdom?

FARM-HAND. I have been in lots of places.

PEASANT. So you say that this drink will give me strength?

FARM-HAND. You will see, — everything good comes from it.

PEASANT. How are we going to do it?

FARM-HAND. It is not a hard matter, if you know how. All we need is a kettle and two iron pots.

PEASANT. And is it pleasant to the taste?

FARM-HAND. As sweet as honey. Try it once, and you will not give it up in a lifetime.

PEASANT. Oh, indeed! I'll go to my neighbour, he had a kettle. I must try.

## ACT IV.

*The scene represents a shed, in the middle of which a walled-up kettle stands on the fire, with an iron pot and faucet. Peasant and farm-hand.*

### SCENE I.

FARM-HAND (*holds the glass under the faucet and drinks the liquor.*) Well, master, it is done.

PEASANT (*squatting and looking on*). That's clever! Water coming from the dough. Why do you let the water off first?

FARM-HAND. This is not water, — it is the stuff.

PEASANT. Why is it so light? I thought it would be as red as beer. This is just like water.

FARM-HAND. Just smell it!

PEASANT (*smells*). Ugh, how strong! Come now, come now, let me taste it in my mouth. (*Tears it out of his hands.*)

FARM-HAND. Wait, you'll spill it. (*Turns the faucet, drinks himself, and elicks his tongue.*) It is done, — here, drink it.

PEASANT (*first barely tastes it, then again and again, and drinks it all. Gives him the glass*). Let me have some more. I have had so little, I cannot make out the taste.

FARM-HAND (*laughs*). Well, do you like it? (*Fills the glass.*)

PEASANT (*drinking*). I must say, it is fine! I'll call

the old woman. Oh, Márfa, come here! It's done. Are you coming?

## SCENE II.

*Wife and girl, and the former.*

WIFE. What makes you shout so?

PEASANT. Just try what we have distilled. (*Gives her the glass.*) Smell it: what fragrance!

WIFE (*smelling*). I declare!

PEASANT. Drink it!

WIFE. If only it won't hurt!

PEASANT. Drink, silly!

WIFE (*drinking*). I must say, it is good!

PEASANT (*a little tipsy*). I should say it is. Wait for what is coming. Potáp says that it makes all tired feelings leave the body. Young people grow old,—I mean, old people grow young. I have just had two glasses, and I feel good in my bones. (*Strikes an attitude.*) You see? Just wait! As soon as we shall be drinking it every day, we shall grow young again! Well, Máshenka! (*Embraces her.*)

WIFE. Come, now! It has made you lose your senses.

PEASANT. Indeed! You said that Potáp and I were wasting the grain, and see what we have invented. Well, say, is it good?

WIFE. Why should it not be good, if it makes old people young? How cheerful you have become! It even cheers me up. Fall in with me: ee (*singing*).

PEASANT. That's it. We shall all be young and happy.

WIFE. I must call in mother-in-law, for she is scolding all the time and feeling lonely. We must change her, too. She will be younger and kinder.

PEASANT (*drunk*). Call mother, call her in! O Máshka, run and call grandmother, and tell grandfather, too, to come. Tell him I want him to get off the oven and come. What's the use of his lying there: we'll make him young. Begone, lively! One foot here and another there. Shoot! (*The girl runs away.*)

PEASANT (*to Wife*). Come, another glass each! (*Farm-hand pours out and gives them another glass.*)

PEASANT (*drinking*). First I grew younger above, in my tongue, then it went to my hands. Now it has reached my legs. I feel my legs are younger. See there, they are walking by themselves. (*Begins to dance.*)

WIFE (*drinking*). Come, good fellow Potáp, and give us some music! (*Potáp takes the balaláyka and plays on it. Peasant and Wife dance together.*)

FARM-HAND (*playing at the front of the stage and laughing, while blinking in their direction. Stops playing, but they continue dancing*). You will pay me for the crust. The good fellows are done up, — they will not get away. Let him come and see.

### SCENE III.

*Enter a healthy-looking old woman and a white-haired old man, and the same.*

OLD MAN. Have you lost your senses? People are working, and you are dancing.

WIFE (*dancing, and beating time with her hands*). Ha, ha, ha! (*In a singsong.*) I have sinned before God. God alone is sinless!

OLD WOMAN. Ah, you slut! Your oven is not attended to, and you dance!

PEASANT. Wait, mother. See what we are doing! We are changing old people into young ones. Here, take a glass! (*Hands her a glass.*)

OLD WOMAN. There is enough water in the well. (*Smelling.*) What did you put in here? Whew, what a smell!

PEASANT AND WIFE. Just drink it!

OLD WOMAN (*tasting it*). I declare! Won't it kill me?

WIFE. It will just revive you. It will make you young.

OLD WOMAN. Indeed? (*Drinking.*) It is good, though! It is better than beer. Father, have a taste of it yourself. (*Old Man sits down, and shakes his head.*)

FARM-HAND. Leave him alone! But grandmother ought to have another glass. (*Offers the Old Woman a glass.*)

OLD WOMAN. If only nothing will happen! Oh, how it burns! But it draws me.

WIFE. Drink! You will feel it running through your veins.

OLD WOMAN. Well, I suppose I shall have to try it. (*Drinks.*)

WIFE. Has it gone to your legs?

OLD WOMAN. I should say so. It is down here. And I feel so light. Let me have some more! (*Drinks another glass.*) Fine! And it makes me so young!

PEASANT. That's what I told you.

OLD WOMAN. Oh, my old man is not here. If he could only see how young I am again. (*Farm-hand plays. Peasant and Wife dance.*)

OLD WOMAN (*walking to the centre*). Is this the way to dance? I'll show you how. (*Dances.*) That's the way. And this way, and this way. Have you seen it? (*Old Man walks up to the kettle and lets the liquor out on the ground.*)

PEASANT (*noticing this, and rushing up to the Old Man*). Rascal, what are you doing there? You have wasted all this good thing! Oh, you old duffer! (*Pushes*

*him and holds the glass under the faucet.)* You have let it all out.

OLD MAN. This is bad, and not good. God has given you a crop of grain, to feed yourself and other people with, and you have distilled it into the devil's drink. No good will come of it. Give up this business, or you will perish and will ruin other people. Give it up! You think that this is a drink, but it is fire and will burn you. *(Takes a chip from under the kettle and puts the fire to the liquor, which burns up. All stand in horror.)*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.

*Peasant's hut. Farm-hand, alone, with his horns and hoofs.*

FARM-HAND. He has a lot of grain, and no place to put it in, and he has now a taste for it. We have distilled some again, and have poured it into a barrel and have hid it away. We will not give drink to people for nothing. We will give drink to those whom we need. I taught him to-day to call the old parasites of the village and fill them with liquor, so that they might separate him from the old man, leaving nothing to the old man. To-day my time is out, — three years have passed and my work is done. Let the Chief himself come and see. I am not ashamed to show things to him.

### SCENE II.

*The Chief comes out from under the ground.*

CHIEF. Well, to-day is the time. Have you earned the crust? I promised you that I would come myself to see. Have you worked the peasant?

FARM-HAND. I have worked him well. Judge for yourself. They will assemble here very soon. Sit down in the oven and see what they will do. You will be satisfied.

CHIEF (*climbing into the oven*). We shall see.

## SCENE III.

*Enter Master and four Old Men; behind them Wife. They seat themselves at the table. Wife covers table and puts on it gelatine and cake. Old Men exchange greetings with Farm-hand.*

FIRST OLD MAN. Well, have you made a lot of liquor?

FARM-HAND. Yes, we have distilled as much as we wanted. What is the use of wasting what we have?

SECOND OLD MAN. And is it good?

FARM-HAND. Better than the first.

SECOND OLD MAN. Where did you learn it?

FARM-HAND. Travelling over the world a man will learn a lot.

THIRD OLD MAN. Yes, yes, you are a man of experience.

PEASANT. Eat!

WIFE (*brings decanter and fills the glasses*). Do us the favour.

FIRST OLD MAN (*drinking*). To your health! Oh, it is good! It just goes through me! (*The three other Old Men do likewise. Chief issues from the oven; Farm-hand stands near him.*)

FARM-HAND (*to Chief*). Watch what will happen. I will trip up the old woman, and she will spill the glass. Before this he did not bother about the crust, but just watch what will happen on account of the glass of liquor.

PEASANT. Wife, fill the glass, and carry it around: to Gossip, and then to Uncle Mikháylo.

WIFE (*fills glass and goes around the table. Farm-hand trips her up, she stumbles and spills the glass*). Oh, dear, I have spilled it! The devil has brought you here.

PEASANT (*to Wife*). What an awkward witch! You



are yourself as though without hands, and there you talk against people. What a precious thing you have spilled there!

WIFE. But I did not do so intentionally.

PEASANT. Not intentionally! Just let me get up and teach you how to spill the liquor. (*To Farm-hand.*) And you, accursed one, what are you doing near the table? Go to the devil! (*Wife fills the glass again and takes it around the table.*)

FARM-HAND (*walking over to the oven, and speaking to the Chief*). You see: before this he did not regret the last crust; but now he almost struck his wife for a glass of liquor, and sent me to you, the devil.

CHIEF. Good, very good. I like that!

FARM-HAND. Wait awhile. Let them empty the bottle, and you will see what will happen. Now they speak smooth, oily words, but soon they will begin to flatter one another, and will be like cunning foxes.

PEASANT. Well, old men, how are you going to settle my case? Grandfather lived in my house and I fed him, but now he has gone to uncle, and he wants to take his part of the house and to give it to uncle. Decide what is best. You are wise men. Without you we are as without a head. There are no people like you in the whole village. Let us take Iván Fedótych,—people say that he is a first-class man; but I tell you the truth, Iván Fedótych,—I love you more than my parents. And Mikháyla Stepánych is my old friend!

FIRST OLD MAN (*to Peasant*). It is nice to speak with a good man,—it gives you wisdom. So it is with you. It is hard to find a man like you.

SECOND OLD MAN. You are wise and kind, and so I love you.

THIRD OLD MAN. I can't tell you how I love you. I told my wife so to-day.

FOURTH OLD MAN. You are a friend, a true friend.

FARM-HAND (*nudging the Chief*). You see? They are all lying. When they are by themselves, they curse one another. And now you see what oily words they use, and how they wag their tails like foxes. It's all from the liquor.

CHIEF. The liquor is good! Very good! If they are going to lie like that they will all be ours. Very good, I like this.

FARM-HAND. Wait: let them drink another bottle, and it will be still different.

WIFE (*treating*). Drink, to your health!

FIRST OLD MAN. Is it not too much? To your health! (*Drinking.*) It is a joy to drink with a good man.

SECOND OLD MAN. We cannot help drinking. To your health, host and hostess!

THIRD OLD MAN. Friends, to your health!

FOURTH OLD MAN. What a brew! Drink! We'll do everything, because I do what I will.

FIRST OLD MAN. Not exactly your will, but as those who are older than you will say.

FOURTH OLD MAN. Older, but sillier. God, where have you come from?

SECOND OLD MAN. Why are you calling names? You fool!

THIRD OLD MAN. He is right, because the host is not treating us for nothing. He means business. We can settle the business. All you have to do is to treat us. Pay your respects to us, because you need me, and not I you. You are a brother to a hog.

PEASANT. Eat it yourself. Don't yell so. What is the matter with you? You are all great on eating.

FIRST OLD MAN. What are you blabbing there? I'll knock your nose edgewise.

PEASANT. Who will?

SECOND OLD MAN. Who are you anyway? The

devil take you! I do not want to talk with you, and will go away.

PEASANT (*holding him back*). Don't break up the company.

SECOND OLD MAN. Let me go, or I'll slap you!

PEASANT. I will not let you. What right have you?

SECOND OLD MAN. This right! (*Strikes him.*)

PEASANT (*to Old Men*). Help! (*Fight. Peasant and Old Men speak all together.*)

FIRST OLD MAN. Because, you know, we are celebrating.

SECOND OLD MAN. I can do anything I have a mind to!

THIRD OLD MAN. Let us have some more!

PEASANT (*shouts to Wife*). Let us have another bottle! (*All seat themselves at the table, and drink.*)

FARM-HAND (*to Chief*). Now you have seen it. The wolf's blood is talking in them now. They are now as bad as wolves.

CHIEF. It's a good drink, I like it.

FARM-HAND. Wait: let them drink a third bottle, and it will be still different.

## ACT VI.

*Scene represents a street. On the right Old Men are sitting on logs, and the Grandfather is between them. In the middle the women, girls, and lads dance the round dance. They sing a dancing song and dance. In the hut a noise and drunken sounds are heard; out comes an Old Man, shouting in a drunken voice; behind him comes the host, who leads him back.*

### SCENE I.

GRANDFATHER. Oh, what sins! What more does one want! Work during the week, and when a holiday comes, wash yourself, fix the harness, take a rest, sit down with your family, go into the street to the old men, and discuss public matters! And if you are young, have a good time! They sing well, and it is a pleasure to look at them. It is all good and peaceful. (*Noise in the hut.*) But what is this? They only provoke people and give pleasure to the devils. It is all from too good living!

### SCENE II.

*From the hut rush drunken men. They make for the women of the round dance, and shout, and seize the girls.*

GIRLS. Let me go, Uncle Karp! Shame on you!

LADS. We shall have to go to the lane, for there is no

fun here! (*All go away, except the drunken man and Grandfather.*)

PEASANT (*walks up to Grandfather, and shows him a fig*). What did you get? The old men have promised to give it all to me. This is what you get. Eat it! They have given it all to me, and you have nothing. They'll tell you so.

FIRST OLD MAN. Because I know what is what.

SECOND OLD MAN. I can get the best of any one, because I myself have whiskers.

THIRD OLD MAN. Dear, deary, dearest!

FOURTH OLD MAN. Walk hut, walk oven,—no place for the hostess to sleep! We are celebrating!

(*The Old Men take hold of one another in pairs and walk off, tottering. Peasant walks toward the house, but stumbles before reaching it, falls down, and grumbles unintelligibly, as if grunting. Grandfather and peasants get up and walk away.*)

### SCENE III.

*Chief and Farm-hand come forward.*

FARM-HAND. Did you see it? Now the pig blood is talking in them. They have turned from wolves into pigs. (*Points to the Peasant.*) He is lying like a swine in the mud, and grunting.

CHIEF. Serves him right! First like foxes, then like wolves, and now they are like pigs. It's a great drink. Tell me how you made such a drink. You must have put fox, wolf, and pig blood into it.

FARM-HAND. No, I only raised more grain than usual. So long as he had barely enough grain, he did not mind a crust; but when he could not store it away, there arose in

him the blood of a fox, a wolf, and a pig. The beast blood has always been in him, but it did not have a chance before.

CHIEF. You are a fine fellow! You have earned the crust. Let them just go on drinking liquor, and they will always be in our power!

## VERSES





# VERSES

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## I.<sup>1</sup>

As in the presence of the rose  
The onion vainly feels regret,  
So I feel shame to meet in prose  
Your challenge, my beloved Fet.

And thus I'll answer you in rhyme, —  
My first attempt, — which makes me fret :  
Decide yourself where ? at what time ?  
Be sure you come to see us, Fet.

What care I if the summer's wet  
Or dry, and I lose all my corn,  
So long as I can walk with Fet,  
And talk with him from morn till morn ?

We worry both our lives away, —  
The future sorrows may beget, —  
Sufficient is unto the day  
The evil of it, comrade Fet.

<sup>1</sup>Only the first number is authentically Tolstóy's. It was written in 1872. The second is given on the authority of Behrs, Tolstóy's brother-in-law. It was supposed to have been written at Sevastopol. The third has been shown to have originated in conjunction with other officers. It is impossible to ascertain which of these lines were composed by Tolstóy himself.

## II.

On September, day the eighth,  
Fighting for our Tsar and faith,  
From the French we fled.

And so bravely we departed  
That the wounded men who started  
In the steppe fell dead.

Ménshik, admiral the sane,  
In the deep and briny main  
Scuttled every ship.

"Luck to you," so Ménshik said,  
To Bakchisaráy he fled,  
" . . . take you all ! "

Saint Arnot, — he acted squarely, —  
For he left the trenches early,  
Flanked us from behind.

He'd have taken us, no doubt,  
Had our saint not helped us out  
On that fateful day.

And they stormed from land and sea  
Sevastopol mightily  
With enormous guns.

And the clergy with devotion  
Prayed to God to shake the ocean  
And to drown the French.

Up then sprang a mighty gale,  
But the French lost not a sail  
On the stormy sea.

Grand dukes came to bluff the French,  
But the enemy did not blench,  
Firing off their guns.

Sharpshooters we needed sadly,  
But the Guard did want them badly, —  
Took them all from us.

We were waiting for a throng  
Speedily to come along  
Down from Kishinév.

Dánenberg they told outright  
To proceed with them and fight,  
Sparing not a man.

Sóymonov and Pávlov went  
Up a steep and hard ascent,  
And they never met.

And Liprándi, who was told  
That the French were getting bold,  
Did not lend a hand.

Some ten thousand were laid low,  
So the Emperor did not show  
Any grace to us.

And the Grand Duke, he got mad,  
“Ours have turned their backs,” he said,  
“Are not worth a fig.”

From this great and bloody scrape  
Only two came out in shape, —  
Their two Highnesses.

With St. Georges decorated  
They were taken to be fêted  
To St. Petersburg.

In the winter we rushed out, —  
Soldiers fell in many a rout  
Near the gabions.

Reinforcements Ménshik needed ;  
His request the Emperor heeded, —  
Sáken was despatched.

Ménshik, admiral the sly,  
Wrote the Tsar a tart reply:  
"Bátyushka our Tsar,

"Erofyéich is too dense,  
And your babies have no sense,  
They do me no good."

Ménshik's letter made him mad,  
At the muster he looked sad,  
And at once grew ill ;

Then the Tsar to heaven sped,  
Where they wanted him, though dead, —  
Wished him long ago.

And before the Tsar was gone,  
He spoke firmly to his son :  
"You be on your guard !"

So the son to Ménshik wrote :  
"I don't care for you a groat,  
Damn you, admiral !

"I will soon despatch another, —  
Gorchakóv, who did so bother  
Formerly the Turks.

"He will get no mighty host :  
He is glad if he can boast  
Pants of crimson hue."

Even though they sent Khrulév,  
Drive we could not from Kozlów  
Any of the Turks.

Work we shall unto the end,  
Sevastopol to defend, —  
Maybe they will run.

### III.

On the fourth we sallied out,  
Carried by the devils' rout,  
Mounts to occupy.

Baron Vrévski was commanding  
Gorchakóv, who then was standing  
At the mountain's foot:

"Prince, this mountain you must seize, —  
No discussions, if you please,  
Or you'll be denounced."

All big guns with epaulette  
Solemnly in councils met, —  
Even Chief Bekók.

And Commandant Chief Bekók  
Tried to say something, — got stuck,  
Did not say a word.

Long they counselled what to do,  
Which topographers all drew  
On a map of war.

This war map was nice and clean, —  
How to get through the ravine  
They forgot to say.

Forward hastened princes, counts,  
And topographers on mounts  
To the great redoubt.

Gorchakóv said: "Go, Liprándi!"  
But Liprándi, "No, *attendez*,  
I don't want to go;

"For that job there is no need  
Of a clever man; send Read, —  
I'll be looking on."

Read without a moment's doubt  
To the bridge ran with a shout:  
"Rush it with 'hurrah!'"

Weimar wept and begged of Read  
Not to rush; he did not heed:  
"No, I cannot stop."

Merrily we yelled "hurrah,"  
The reserves remained away, —  
Some one was at fault.

Of whole regiments did arrive  
But two companies alive  
At Fedyúkhin Heights.

Ushakóv the general, —  
He was not afraid at all  
Waiting for a change.

And he could not wait much longer,  
And his heart grew strong and stronger,  
And he crossed the rill.

And Byelávtsov shook the flag  
Like a piece of dirty rag, —  
'Twas not nice at all.

Our army was not strong,  
When the Frenchmen rushed along,  
And no succour came.

From the garrison, we thought,  
A fresh column would be brought,  
And we gave the sign.

General Sáken had a scare,  
He read prayer after prayer  
To the Holy Maid.

We were pressed and had to run  
Whither we were led.

We did wait at Fot-Salá  
For our bátyushka the Tsar, —  
He came on the first.

Everybody with emotion  
Was expecting some promotion, —  
Did not get a thing.

# LEV N. TOLSTÓY

An Analysis of His Life and Works by the  
Translator





# LEV N. TOLSTÓY

An Analysis of His Life and Works by the  
Translator

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## I.

THERE is a well-known philological phenomenon by which exactly opposite meanings may be derived from one and the same root, not by any *lucus a non lucendo* method, but because a slight shifting of an emphasis frequently leads to an inversion of the idea under consideration. It is by a similar process that Tolstóy's life and works have been interpreted from diametrically opposite sides. Some would make us believe that Tolstóy is a modern saint, while others decry him as a mountebank and hypocrite. If we are to believe one set of authors, Tolstóy is a far-sighted statesman, a practical Christian, a trenchant critic of the existing order of things, an educator of marvellous insight, an artist, and a profound art critic; while others prove to us persuasively that his teachings are subversive of all order, that his Christianity is the claptrap of the sectarian verbalist, that he is a dreamer and does not know anything about the actual state of affairs, that he is an indifferent teacher, that his productions rarely rise above mediocrity, and that as an art critic he is absolutely wrong. According to some he belongs to the same category of writers as Dostoévski,

Turgénev, and the rest of the great Russian authors, while according to others he stands outside all literary circles and traditions.

This great diversity of opinions is by no means confined to foreign critics, for even in Russia Tolstóy is viewed variously, and what adds there to the confusion of him who would get an exact picture of the man is the strange fact that contrary conceptions are held by the same individuals. Thus the men of state, who see in him a harmless, impractical fanatic, none the less fear him as a tremendous power, to whose insidious activity they would ascribe much of the present agitation. So, too, the revolutionists and liberals, who stand at the opposite pole of political wisdom from the one pointed out by Tolstóy, and who differ widely from him in all practical questions, are quick to recognize him as a factor in the liberation of the country and have placed his name at the head of their constitutional programmes, as that of one who augurs the greatness of the new Russia.

Wherever the truth may be, it is obvious that only a nature of gigantic proportions could give rise to such varied valuations. But here we are again confronted with the question as to how much Tolstóy's peculiar genius is the outcropping of a soil rich in literary talent, such as Russia has been the home of since the forties of the nineteenth century, how much originality we should ascribe to the author's ideas, which show direct obligations to a large number of foreign writers, mainly American, and how much influence he is exerting, or likely to exert, in his own country and abroad. The answer is fraught with many difficulties, as so far little or no attention has been directed to this aspect of Tolstóy's activity, and these difficulties are still further enhanced for an American, because, in spite of the remarkable parallelism of the intellectual movements of the two countries in the last 150 years, literature has had such widely different

functions in Russia that it is not always easy for an American correctly to appraise any given literary production or the whole literary activity of a Russian author.

That the Russian and the American intellectual life have many points in common must be apparent even to the casual observer. While Franklin developed an astounding energy in every imaginable field of human endeavour, Lomonósov wrote tragedies, poetry, and history, taught in the academy and lectured, established laboratories and investigated, simultaneously with Franklin, the electricity of the clouds. What Benjamin Rush and other men of his stamp did for the young American republic was, at the end of the reign of Catherine (who, by the way, gave a commission to the American naval hero, John Paul Jones), inaugurated by the zealous band of Masons, by men like Nóvikov, and Radíshchev's *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* advocated reforms which Benjamin Rush helped to inaugurate in Pennsylvania, among them the abolition of slavery.

Alexander I.'s offer to mediate in the American war of 1812, which was contemporaneous with the French invasion of Russia, was not a mere whim of the emperor, but was based on his genuine interest in everything American, as is evidenced by his request to be given a draft of the American constitution, which Thomas Jefferson sent him, and by his great partiality to Americans visiting Russia, to one of whom, Poinset, he offered any commission he would be willing to accept. The interest of Russians in America, first shown by Radíshchev, who in his work refers to the United States, and evinced by Alexander, was quite apparent in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when Polétika, a member of the famous literary society of the "Arzamas," of which Púshkin and other distinguished authors were members, passed a number of years in the United States and wrote one of the first books on America. This work, written originally in

French, but, as the author said, intended for his Russian fellow citizens, interested even people in America, where, in the year 1826, it was translated into English.

Again, the abolition movement in the United States ran parallel with the agitation for the emancipation of the serfs in Russia, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* finds its counterpart in Turgénev's and Grigoróvich's peasant stories; indeed, Grigoróvich was even called the Russian Beecher-Stowe. While the agitation for freeing the slaves culminated in America in the Civil War, the same agitation for the emancipation of the serfs ended in Russia simultaneously in their being set free.

We have so far traced the chronological parallelism in the intellectual movements in the two countries and have pointed out the great share that America has had in the literary life of Russia up to the sixties. But the divergencies, even up to that time, and certainly later, are more patent than the resemblances. Why, if Russia has kept in close contact with what has been going on in the United States and has drawn largely on its intellectual resources, has Russian literature developed so differently from American literature, and why has Russian political and social life not taken the same direction as in America? The elucidation of these questions will make it possible for us to find the proper setting for Tolstóy's activity, will clearly define his position in the Russian intellectual life, and will show us his indebtedness to American thought.

Revolt is the dominant note in a nation's forward movement toward a better future. Without revolt there can be no progress. A breaking away from established customs, beliefs, practices, is necessarily accompanied by a certain amount of violence. This opposition to stagnation may find its expression as revolt, reform, or protest, and in its acute stage rises to Revolution, Reformation, Protestantism, which mark the end of the old, and the beginning of the new, era. A revolution, the culmination of a

long period of systematic protestations, is brought about in consequence of continued political action or by a thorough ferment of men's minds through literary means, or by both factors at the same time. Where political life has been able to evolve itself, the revolt partakes more of the nature of action; where that has not been the case, the revolt finds its expression chiefly through the written word.

Here precisely lies the difference between the evolution of liberty in the United States and in Russia. In America, with the inherited English political life, protests have even been made by political pamphlets, by means of the ephemeral press, by public meetings, — by resolutionizing, — and, in extreme cases, by an appeal to arms. Literature, that is, belles-lettres, with the probable exception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, has never entered into the arena of political struggle, and it would puzzle an American to hear one speak of a Democratic or a Republican literature. But countries like Russia have had neither the liberty to express their views collectively nor the historical training necessary for concerted action. Whatever progress has been made in Russia has invariably proceeded from a small, mentally energetic group of men who have reached out to larger and ever larger masses by means of the written word in its most attractive form, the belles-lettres, which alone could be accessible to the whole intellectual class of readers.

Thus we are led to formulate the lemma that literature stands in inverse proportion to the political life of a nation. The more vigorous the political action is, the more does literature fade as a factor of progress; the less developed a nation is politically, the more does literature come to the front as the all-absorbing subject of intellectual life. In America literature has ever been the mental sport of men of letters, and has served as a means of amusement or refinement for the leisure class. In

Russia it has, at least through the last three quarters of the nineteenth century, been the solemn occupation of men working for definite social and political purposes, and has served, not as a means for pleasantly passing the time, but as instruction, as the confession of the heart, as a species of national wisdom, as the forum of public opinion, for all those who read. While the chief purpose of literature in America has been to create laughter (witness the large number of humourists), Russian literature, with but rare exceptions, provokes tears, — tears of contrition, tears of despair, tears of emotion, but always tears.

When, toward the end of the eighteenth century, something like public opinion was beginning to formulate itself in Russia, it found its expression in satires, calling into life a whole series of satirical journals, and in comedies, which dealt with the same reverse sides of the national existence. At a time when in America the new wine of political freedom led to the practical realization of advanced ideas in the foundation of schools, in the upbuilding of states and cities, in the extension of commercial enterprises to most distant countries, Russia was concentrating all her efforts on the development of her literary resources. The reign of Alexander I., so famous for the gigantic struggle with the French intruder, is far more important as the period when all kinds of literary productions feverishly contended with one another for supremacy, when every foreign influence was brought to bear on the development of the national literature, when the pseudo-classic, the Romantic, the Sentimental schools existed side by side, when translations from the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, the German, the English, reached the highest possible linguistic perfection, — when the whole foundation was laid for a distinctly Russian literature.

But even then, when the youthful fervour of the

creative genius revelled in form rather than in contents, we clearly perceive the new mission that Russian belles-lettres were to have as a school of liberty for the people. As early as the end of Catherine's reign, Radíshehev, whose *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* smacked too much of Franklin, as Catherine expressed it, and advocated reforms which were carried out in the emancipation of the serfs, suffered exile for his liberal views. Púshkin, who in his younger years fully comprehended his office of a poet to be that of a champion of liberty, was banished to the south of Russia. Rylyév, whose ardent muse was devoted to patriotic songs, joined the Decembrist revolt and lost his life together with the other revolutionists.

The literary activity evolved in Russia during the reign of Nicholas I. differs even more widely from the literary activity of America for the same period. The poetry of the two countries, at least for the earlier part of the second quarter of the century, offers many parallels. Bryant, Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, bear much resemblance to Púshin, Lérmonov, and the other poets of the period; but very soon Russian poetry, though not discontinued, falls entirely into the background, overshadowed by the more powerful prose and put to rout by the incisive analysis of the Russian critics, while in America, where the cry against art for art's sake was not seriously considered, poetry, the same kind of poetry as before, and every kind of poetry, continues unabated to give its periodic crops. The revolt is voiced by Whitman alone, who thus is more akin to the Russian spirit. American prose, when, like Emerson's, it is not in a lighter vein, is accessible only to the choice spirits of refined society, and the social, political, religious revolts find their expression in the byways of literature, entirely escaping the attention of the public at large. The protest against the existing order leads to the formation of communities, such as the

Brook Farm, the Hopedale Community, the communities of the Perfectionists, or engages men, like William Lloyd Garrison, in a vigorous, untiring propaganda by public speeches and political pamphlets, or, as in the case of Parker, restricts the agitation to the narrower circle of the church. In Russia men like Ballou, Garrison, Parker would have become the shining lights of literature.

Meanwhile the Russian critics were applying aquafortis to the theory of art for art's sake, completely reducing the splendid poetry of the first third of the century to mere literary lees. The belles-lettres were put under tribute to the critics, who henceforth acted as appraisers and censors of every nascent genius. It was in the thirties that Russian youths first came in contact with German philosophy and that Schelling and Hegel dictated the terms on which all literary activity in Russia was to develop, and the authors hastened to apply these German ideas to their productions with much more zeal than was done in Germany itself. Russians have ever shown a readiness to adopt foreign ideas and make them much more thoroughly the basis of action than they are in the countries of their birth. Thus Sterne's sentimentalism, and Göthe's *Werther's Leiden* gave rise to Karamzín's *Poor Liza*, with the pilgrimage of hundreds of readers to Liza's Pond, the imaginary spot where the action of the story took place; Byron's romanticism found its perfervid advocates in Púshkin and Lérmontov, and gave rise to the ultra-romantic novels of Bestúzhev-Marlínski and the ultra-romantic love-affairs of the author himself. Moleschott and Büchner played havoc with the generation of men in the sixties, and Turgénev has given us a picture of such an ultra-materialism in Bazárov, the hero of his *Fathers and Sons*.

Several causes have brought about this unusual zeal for new ideas, chief among which are the absence of political, social, cultural traditions and the inherent ration-



alism of the Russian mind. Both causes preclude the principle of compromise, which has played such an important part in the evolution of Anglo-Saxon life. The clearly outlined class traditions and the readiness to accept ecclesiastic, political, and social fictions, which are common in English-speaking countries, make compromise a matter of necessity, for, to have one's idiosyncrasies respected, it is indispensable that those of one's neighbours be respected as well. This tendency to compromise, to consider expediency, rather than abstract truth and justice, leads the Anglo-Saxon to emphasize the practical side of life, to value an idea according to its immediate applicability.

For the Russian, compromise has no meaning. What nucleus of class tradition there may have existed previous to the reforms of Peter the Great was carried away by the introduction of distinctions of rank (the *chins*), which are granted only for service. This absence of a class tradition has remained permanent, because the successive generations of men of culture have been recruited from different centres and have been shifted from the higher nobility in the eighteenth century to the gentry in the first half of the nineteenth century, and since then to the men of various ranks, including the peasants since their emancipation. So constant and so complete has been the shifting of intellectualism that there have not existed any common points between fathers and sons, so that the very name of *Fathers and Sons* served Turgénev as the basis for what he intended to be the most characteristic Russian novel of the time. The bureaucracy, too, though forming a more compact body than any other class in the state, has always been recruited from all the different classes and has never been self-perpetuating. Thus neither social, nor cultural, nor political traditions have found any favourable soil in Russia, and the question of compromise has not been urgent.

Not only have the so-called "practical" considerations been inactive in Russian life, but there have also been positive incitements to the enthronement of reason, justice, and truth independently of their applicability and practical convenience. Even in the most remote past one is struck by the extremely rational sense of the Russians. The early chronicles startle one by their realistic narration, which is evidently based on actual participation in the events or on the reports of eye-witnesses. Nikítin's account of his journey to India could not have been written with greater straightforwardness at the present time, and stands in remarkable contrast to Marco Polo's story, which precedes Nikítin's by less than a century. The pilgrimage of Daniel the Palmer to Jerusalem is a remarkable document which baffles one by its modernness. Not less rational is the Russian peasant. It is only his ignorance, which is fostered by state and church, that keeps him down to a low level of life; the moment he frees himself from the incubus of state and church, he develops a remarkable mental activity, interprets the Gospel without reserve of thought or of action, and lives up to his convictions. By far the best part of the Russian peasant population is to be found among the dissenters, the Dukhobors, the Milkers, the Stundists, the Lashers, some of whom, by a wrong interpretation of Gospel tenets, carry their convictions to such excess that they commit self-mutilation and self-destruction. In the same way have the intellectuals of Russia unswervingly followed the dictates of their reason, independently of any consequences and making no concessions to the opinions of their antagonists.

Russia presents many examples of this uncompromising spirit: the ineradicable hostility between the bureaucracy and the intellectuals, the hopeless and useless Decembrist revolt, the mad daring of the Nihilists and Revolutionists, the wicked persecutions of the Greek Catholic Church,

and the dogged passive opposition of the dissenting sects all bear witness to the unbending, indomitable mental attitude of the average Russian. With such material, it would seem, the liberal tendencies once expressed would inevitably lead in the end to victory, and all actions would be carried to their logical consequences. That would, indeed, be the case, if certain negative qualities in the Russian character, vacillation and aimlessness, did not constantly undo what is categorically dictated by reason.

Periodically there have appeared in Russia novels which centre about an individual intended as the personification of the average Russian. Such have been Púshkin's *Evgéni Onyégín*, Lérmontov's *The Hero of Our Time*, Herzen's *Who Is to Blame?* Goncharóv's *Oblómov*, Tur-génev's *Fathers and Sons*, Chernyshévski's *What Is to Be Done?* In all of these the heroes suffer from the fatal national vice, which leaves their activity unfinished and which puts to naught all their good endeavours by leading them to cheerless, hopeless resignation. The writer of these lines, like many other Russians, was probably more affected, during the formative period of his life, by Goncharóv's *Oblómov* than by any other book. He felt that Oblómov, with all his good intentions, but with his indolence, his vacillation, his aimlessness, was he himself; that he was certainly moving fast in the direction taken by the hero of the novel, and that there were no forces within him to save him from the pool of stagnation.

So long as this vacillation and fatalistic indolence was confined to the upper classes, as was the case in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the hero of the novel was an aristocratic Lovelace or a blasé Byronian who ascribed his despondency to a satiety with the artificial conditions of society. But in the thirties the educated young men, having come in contact with German philosophy, no longer lived the careless life of gentlemen:

they were anxious to tear themselves away from the slough of inactivity, they wanted to do something. Of this type are the heroes described in *Who Is to Blame?* and in *Oblómov*. Meanwhile a strong democratic sentiment was sweeping the whole country, and the "people," by which term the lower classes, preëminently the peasants, were meant, became the watchword for those who were endeavouring to find a useful activity for themselves.

The aristocratic feeling among the upper classes had never been very strong, as the previously mentioned bureaucratic régime of distinctions of rank seriously interfered with the consolidation of the nobility. The only permanent superior arbiter of thought and action was the class of the intellectuals, which kept shifting lower down in the social scale. The disintegration of the social classes, which was going on at a rapid rate, steadily removed the intellectuals, recruited from the upper social layers, from solidarity with their own nobility. It was evident to them that Russia was not to be found characteristically in the privileged minority, and yet these men must belong somewhere. They certainly could not ally themselves with Germany, from which country chiefly proceeded their new philosophical bias, since they not only differed from the Germans in language, but more especially in those foibles which, on the one hand, appeared to them as peculiarly Russian, and which, on the other, made them look with horror and contempt upon the precision and methodical ways of their German neighbours. Outside the amorphous nobility and the shifting class of the intellectuals were the vast, uncouth, unfathomed masses of the peasant. Here alone, if anywhere, was the pith of the Russian nation, the "people."

Those who, like Herzen, keenly felt their obligation to the West for their enlightenment, devoted themselves to the uplifting of the masses on a European basis.

Though recognizing the inherent qualities of the Russian peasant, these Westerners thought it necessary to raise them to a higher level, to Europeanize them. Others, the Slavophiles, rejected all European admixture as foreign to the Russian spirit, and devoted all their interest to the masses, in so far as these differed from themselves and from the West. But the Slavophiles made the grave mistake of regarding Greek Catholicism and autocracy as equally distinguishing features of Russia, and of ascribing the same potency to church and state that they ascribed to the people. Thus they inevitably led to retrogression, no matter how well-intentioned they may have been. However, the fact remains that the peasants, the "people," henceforth became the preoccupation of the intellectuals and the men of letters.

Tolstóy was born in 1828. His first literary production appeared in 1852. Thus his youth fell in a time when the ferment of men's minds was at its highest. The aristocratic circle to which he belonged no longer was the sole possessor of culture, for the men of the various ranks were meeting with those from the upper classes on the same intellectual level. Slavophiles and Westerners were in the heyday of their democratic transports, vying with one another in giving expression to their love for the masses. Democracy, pervading all classes of society, was clamouring for the emancipation of the serfs. Men were anxious to do something, especially to improve the condition of the peasants, but their efforts were generally abortive, in consequence of the fatal national defects of vacillation and aimlessness. Revolt, intellectual revolt at least, was the dominant note of all literary endeavour, and literature absorbed the functions elsewhere assumed by political economy, philosophy, religion. Such was the soil from which the great genius of Russia was to sprout.

## II.

MANY an attempt has been made to write a life of Tolstóy, but it cannot be said that a biography of the man has as yet been presented to the reader. The facts, sufficiently concrete for the first part of the author's life, pale by the time maturity is reached, and, as years proceed, entirely fade away. The intenser the internal life becomes, the less tangible is the relation of Tolstóy's thoughts to the incidents in his life, the less weight can we ascribe to the chronology of a brief three-score and ten. "The law of progress, of perfectibility, is written in the soul of each man, and is transferred to history only through error," says Tolstóy. Substitute man's material existence for history, and we get the reason why biography, the counterpart of history, must of necessity cover but a small part of the existence of one living intensely the spiritual life.

Even for the earlier days of his earthly career we get but few facts that are not, in one way or another, contained in the photographic records of his inner consciousness, which, chastened by reflection and but thinly disguised, are revealed to us in all his writings. What the author has chosen not to present to our gaze can hardly be of importance to us, since sincerity, one of the chief criterions applied by him in judging productions of art, is not only the keystone to his own thoughts and utterances, but has so thoroughly been applied by him, in his desire to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that we should in vain rummage through his soul for additional data or for any mental reservation.

Tolstóy is all in his writings, and if not one word more were heard from him or about his life, we should still have the whole man.

But such is human frailty that the saintly life of a man generally leads to the worship of his earthly relics, that we adorn our habitations with the images of those whose spirituality vivifies us, that we are more concerned about the carnal life of a teacher than about his teachership. We shall give our due to this natural desire, mustering such details as have become known, but will use this material chiefly in order to point out the correspondence between the author's life and his writings.

Tolstóy's ancestors on his father's side were distinguished boyárs, with rather shady political reputations, who had taken part in important affairs of state, and one of them, Peter Andréevich Tolstóy, was made a count by Peter the Great. Tolstóy's grandfather, Ilyá Andréevich, is depicted in *War and Peace* as the elder Rostóv. Tolstóy's father, Nikoláy Ilích, of whom we have a pen-sketch in *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, served through the war of 1812 and, after having gambled away his fortune, married Márya Nikoláevna Volkónski, described as Princess Márya Bolkónski, in *War and Peace*. Four sons were born of the marriage, of whom Nikoláy was the eldest and Lev the youngest; there was also a daughter, Márya, who was one year younger than Lev.

Lev was born August 28 (old style), 1828. His mother died when he was but three years old, and his father, six years later. Tolstóy thinks he can recall some incidents from that early period. He has an impression that he was swaddled and that he wanted to free himself, that he felt the cruelty and the injustice of fate, that he was conscious of his own weakness and of the strength of others. This was the first and most powerful impression of his life. It was only when he was five years old that he came to see Nature. About the same time he was

put in charge of the German tutor, Fédor Ivánovich Rössel, who had been instructing his elder brothers, without, however, being taken from the care of his "tall, plump, black-haired, kindly, tender, compassionate" aunt, T. A. Érgolski.

The family had just settled in Moscow, when the father died, and the children were taken back to Yásnaya Polyána, where they grew up under the guardianship of their father's sister, Countess A. I. Ósten-Sáken. In 1840, however, this aunt died, and the children were taken to Kazán, to the house of another aunt, P. I. Yúshkov, "a pure soul," who later on kept telling him that she wished nothing so much as that he should form a liaison with a married woman, become an adjutant to the emperor, and marry a very rich girl. Tolstóy was but ten years old when he became imbued with religious doubts, and soon after he read Voltaire. His home instruction was carried on under the supervision of a French tutor, Prosper St. Thomas, who remained with the family until after Tolstóy had passed his examination for the University of Kazán, the Philological Department of which he entered in the year 1843.

Tolstóy did not devote himself much to study at the university, which was partly due to the fact that the professors were not in the least interesting and that they were arbitrary in their judgment of the students' progress. He twice failed in subjects, only because the professor in question happened to be quarrelling with members of Tolstóy's family. After two years' desultory studying, Tolstóy left the university and returned to Yásnaya Polyána, which was his share of the inheritance. Here he devoted himself to the uplifting of the peasants, meeting with disastrous results, which are minutely described in *A Morning of a Landed Proprietor*. In 1848 he went to St. Petersburg, where he passed his candidate's examination at the university, but he very soon returned to Yásnaya



Polyána, bringing with him a dissipated German musician, Rudolph by name. With this Rudolph he devoted himself to music, especially to Beethoven.

For two years Tolstóy abandoned himself with his brother Sergyéy to dissipations of every kind, to gambling, to the chase, to music. Then his elder brother, Nikoláy, to whom he was most affectionately attached, returned from the Caucasus, where he served in the army. Nikoláy tried to persuade his brother to go back to the Caucasus with him, but Tolstóy withstood all his blandishments, until, having in 1851 lost very heavily at cards, he suddenly withdrew from his friends and from society, and buried himself in Pyatigórsk, in the Caucasus, passing most of his time in the company of an Old-believer, Uncle Epíshka (described as Eróshka in *The Cossacks*), a famous hunter. He here accidentally fell in with a great-uncle of his who was adjutant to Prince Baryatínski, and who persuaded him to enter the army of the Caucasus as a volunteer.

It was here, in the Caucasus, that Tolstóy wrote his first literary productions, *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, the first chapters of *Youth*, *A Morning of a Landed Proprietor*, and *The Incursion*, and sketched the plan for the *Cossacks*. On July 9, 1852, Tolstóy sent his sketch, *Childhood*, to Nekrásov, who was editing the *Contemporary*, and shortly after that it was published, although the author received no payment for it.

Such is briefly the chronological sequence of Tolstóy's external life from his birth to the end of his experience in the Caucasus. We shall now scrutinize the author's inward life, as depicted in his writings of that time.

The subtle influences that determine the career of a genius cannot be fathomed, but there are generally some separate factors which more than any others seem to determine the course which it is likely to take. In *Child-*

*hood, Boyhood, and Youth* we are told that Nikoláy Irténev, who is obviously no other than Tolstóy himself, was awkward and homely, and that these untoward qualities were coupled with an agonizing supersensitiveness. Persons who are so little endowed with graces by Nature are apt to keep their ego prominently before their eyes for the purpose of inflicting torments upon themselves. When, in addition, we have every reason to assume that Tolstóy came early under the spell of Rousseau, whom he quotes several times, apparently as his mentor, we can understand why he should have launched into literature with a Confession, which is but a species of self-castigation.

Of the three conditions for the infectiousness of art, Tolstóy values sincerity as the most important of all. The test which he would apply to any production of art fully justifies us in classing his first literary ventures as artistic productions: such is the frankness with which the child's, the boy's, the youth's foibles are laid bare, so true is the by no means faultless life of the father, so touching is the death of the mother, that, although we have difficulty in deciding whether it is Nikoláy Irténev or Dmítí Nekhlyúdob who really represents the author himself, although Tolstóy had barely a remembrance of his father and certainly did not have any personal knowledge of his mother, we are quite sure that he is describing actual incidents from his own life. This first production, which already contains in the embryo all the artistic qualities and all the personal defects of his later writings, is extremely important to the student of the author's life and works. It is the zero point on the thermometer of his literary and religious activity.

*Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, of which we shall speak collectively as one work, begins with the description of the tutor, Karl Ivánovich, the kindly, half-educated, methodical, excitable German, the very antithesis of the

typical Russian. Here the author simply falls in with the general dislike of the German, which is not based on any race or national animosities, but only on the incompatibility of the Russian character with that of the neighbouring country, so many of whose citizens have, through their employment in various governmental and military positions, come in contact with the more mercurial and less precise Russians, whose sensibilities they somehow have managed to rouse. To no class of foreigners has Tolstóy devoted so much space as to the Germans, and there is hardly one among these, no matter how desirable their qualities must appear to any one else, that does not irritate him. Such are Lieutenant Rosenkranz, who "frequently spoke of his genealogy . . . and proved conclusively that he and his ancestors had been pure Russians;" and Staff-Captain Kraut, who, in spite of his admirable character, had something lacking as a man, and who, "like all Russian Germans, in strange contradistinction to the ideal German Germans, was in the highest degree practical;" and boastful Kraft, "who wants to be a comrade;" and the exemplary Officer Berg, who puts his marriage to Vyéra Rostóv on a strictly commercial basis; and General Pfuel, who is more concerned about the scientific exactness of the military operations than about their successful issues. Nor was this feeling confined to the Russian Germans, for at the same time Tolstóy did not approve of the German teachers, nor of German methods in general. When later, under the influence of the Sermon on the Mount, he embraced all men under the general term of "our neighbours," he still found individual Germans most unattractive, and deserted Schopenhauer, to whom he had clung for so long a time, declared Nietzsche a wicked corrupter of morals, saw in Wagner an arch adulterer of art, and declared William II. to be the most comical of all the sovereigns.

Tolstóy's religiousness is by no means the result of a

sudden conversion, as he himself thought and his critics would make us believe, but was inherent in his nature. Two incidents bear witness to his early religious trend, the experience with the saintly fool, and his confession. The saintly fool is a peculiar Russian institution. Hundreds of men and women who are half-witted, or at least supposed to be, leading a vagrant existence, without home, or property, or labour, but with an abundance of simple, half-superstitious faith, march from monastery to monastery, where there may be holy relics, and now and then pass their time at some estate, where they frequently are hospitably entertained by the religiously inclined. They seem to typify the simple of faith of whom the Gospel speaks. The admiration expressed for the simple, ardent faith of the saintly fool, "Your faith was so strong that you felt the nearness of God, your love was so great that words flowed of their own will from your lips, and you did not verify them by reason," is but the youthful prototype of the later "love of God." There is no difference in quality of belief,—there is only a difference of maturity. The same religious fervour is displayed in Nikoláy's preparation for the confession and the second confession, both of which are preceded by the composition of "Rules of Life," by which to be guided in his daily conduct. A confession is a purging of sins, and reacts powerfully upon the person confessing, by creating a spirit of contrition and meekness,—such is Tolstóy's earliest conception of this sacrament, and though in the case of Levín he had doubts about all the externals of the act, he none the less later, when he completely breaks away from ecclesiasticism, speaks in *Resurrection* with emotion of the effect of the confession on Katýúsha, and frequently, in his religious writings, in his diary, and in his letters, dwells upon the necessity of a confession of sins, not as a truce with God, but as a purging of one's own sins. *My Confession* is the logical sequel of that

religiousness which was part of Tolstóy's life in his earliest youth, and which received an additional impetus through his adherence to Rousseau's theories.

Next to religiousness, the love of outdoor life, and of hunting especially, was Tolstóy's greatest passion, until his humaner views on the sanctity of all life put a stop to his favourite diversion. Accordingly, immediately after the chapter dealing with the saintly fool, we get the account of the chase. There are few episodes which Tolstóy describes so well as the hunt. Not only do we in such cases have very spirited stories of the sport itself and of the dogs, which he describes with the love of a hunter, but we also get some of the best descriptive passages, for which he is so famous. It is, after all, not so much the sport itself that attracted him so powerfully as the magnificence of Nature, which at the time that the chase is most favourable is at the height of its beauty. Even in his first experience he lost his game by becoming all-absorbed in the busy life of the ants and the flitting about of a yellow-winged butterfly. In the *Cossacks*, the hunting scenes give him an opportunity to describe the voluptuous woods of the Caucasus, where even the stinging of the innumerable mosquitoes becomes a pleasure, and it is during one of these hunting expeditions, while resting in the chase of the stag, that he arrives at the conclusion that the highest good is happiness, and that happiness is to be found in love, in self-sacrifice, — a theme which later is to form the basis of his relation to God. Whether inborn or fostered by Rousseau's theory, the love of Nature is his strongest passion after religion, and it is this love of Nature that soon was to take him away from the unnatural conditions of a city life and was to determine his future actions.

Reflections, however, crowded upon him at all important events of life, and of these there is none upon which he dwelt so constantly and so profoundly as upon death.

An intense desire for life and a fearlessness of death have always been characteristic of Tolstóy, and he has devoted even more pains to the depiction of scenes of death than to the portraiture of passion, and has produced three stories, *Three Deaths*, *The Death of Iván Ilích*, and *Master and Workman*, which deal exclusively with various aspects of death. In his *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, and *Youth* we have no less than three deaths, that of the mother, the grandmother, and Natálya Sávishna. The grandmother's death is merely mentioned to contrast it with the unrestrained merriment and the Homeric laugh of boyhood in the full bloom of life. On the mother's death Tolstóy lavishes all the affection which he always had in store for a mother, to him the highest ideal of a woman. All the tenderness, devotion, forgiveness, which a woman is capable of are crowded into the last letter written by the mother. With what minuteness all the conflicting circumstances and details are, with more than usual faithfulness, even on account of the acute pain produced by the near demise of the mother, brought before us to accentuate the grandeur and importance of the last moment! The closed door, weeping Mimi, the father walking on tiptoe, the meaningless face of fool Akím who formerly used to amuse him, the darkened windows, Natálya Sávishna knitting a stocking, *la belle Flamande*, the mingled odour of mint, eau de cologne, camomile, and Hoffmann's drops, — what a wealth of simple, yet heartrending circumstances of death! And, then, death itself! How attracted Nikoláy is to the pale face, with the black spot under the transparent skin, on one of her cheeks, and how, in the presence of the lifeless body, pleasant thoughts and dreams take him away from reality! Then the single moment of real grief, and Mimi's insincere tears, and the hypocrisy of the consolations, and the one real sorrow of Natálya Sávishna, and the terror evoked by her who was once a beloved creature! What a mass of finely observed facts, later in life to be

leisurely worked out with even greater insistence on the grandeur of the final incident in the earthly life!

To die properly, — that is the great problem of life, as Tolstóy sees it. In *War and Peace*, Platón Karatáev's meek life and peaceful death have been commented upon by the critics as the earliest instance of Tolstóy's glorification of the Christian life; but that is not quite correct: the first instance had already been given in the life and death of Natálya Sávishna, who, after a life of unswerving devotion to her mistress, a month before her death herself prepared all her funeral clothes, transferred all the property in her charge to the new stewardess, and, after much suffering, which she bore with Christian patience, confessed her sins, begged everybody's forgiveness, and "executed the best and highest act of this life, — she died without regrets or fear." Under the overpowering influence of these two deaths, childhood finds itself promoted to a new stage of life, and with death the first production fittingly ends.

The fundamental questions concerning religiousness, love of Nature, death, which form the chief preoccupation of Tolstóy's maturer years, having been fully treated in *Childhood*, we get in *Boyhood* the more worldly aspects of life; but even here are foreshadowed his future social and educational ideas. Here we are told of the first time when Nikoláy became aware of the difference between the rich and the poor, and of the shame he felt for being rich; of the terrible effect punishment, inflicted maliciously, has upon the mind of a boy; of the nascent sexual feeling; and, above all else, of his tendency to philosophize, which, in later years, was to imbue him with the idea of suicide, and which at this earliest period nearly drove him insane. Even then he was wavering between the opposite extremes: the highest good consisted either in the ability to bear sufferings, or in enjoying the present and not caring for the future. He tried to penetrate

the impenetrable and to solve the mystery of eternity. He tried to "take nothingness by surprise," and, in his abstract reasoning, he "fell into the inextricable circle of the analysis of his thoughts," arriving at a point when he "was thinking of thinking that he was thinking, and reason was lost in empty speculation."

In *Boyhood* we are introduced to a character who afterward is frequently used by Tolstóy as the literary representative of himself. This is Dmítiri Nekhlyúdob. It is also clear that even here Nekhlyúdob is intended for the author himself. This doubling of Tolstóy occurs also in *War and Peace*, where both Pierre and Andréy Bolkónski are reflections of the author's own life. Tolstóy's whole existence has passed in a severe struggle between two diametrically opposed natures within himself: now the intensely worldly man within him gains supremacy, and his artistic temperament has full sway, and now it is his spiritual self that tries to crush out the carnal man. It is this struggle which divides all his larger productions into the unconsciously artistic and the consciously didactic parts. As his years advance the spiritual side becomes more and more accentuated, though in unconscious moments his artistic, human side breaks forth with dazzling brilliancy, while in his younger years his human side was more in evidence, and gave rise to a series of artistic productions. But even in his earliest works this struggle exists, and it is due to this that he consciously or unconsciously splits himself up into two separate individuals. In *Boyhood* and *Youth* Dmítiri Nekhlyúdob represents the nascent spiritual, more ideal man versus Nikoláy Irténev, the more human and material man. Nekhlyúdob completes Irténev, as later the Bible was to complete a life that was under the spell of Rousseau. Under the influence of Nekhlyúdob, Irténev began ecstatically to worship the ideal of virtue and dreamed of destroying all human vices and misfortunes, and, above



all, of correcting himself and appropriating to himself all virtues.

With Nekhlyúdob's friendship ends the *Boyhood*, as, indeed, the experiences related in *Youth* belong more properly to the period intervening between Tolstóy's experience in the Caucasus and his settlement on his estate, when the greater part of the chapters were actually written down. Of the two short stories, *The Incursion* serves, as it were, as a sketch for his other military stories, which were to culminate in *Sevastopol*, while *A Morning of a Landed Proprietor* deals with an important incident in Tolstóy's life, when he for the first time withdrew to the country to live the life of a country squire and to devote all his energies to the cause of the peasants.

Here it is Nekhlyúdob through whom the author speaks. The story is very characteristic of Tolstóy's whole activity and is typical of Russian conditions. Tolstóy at the age of nineteen conceived the idea of acting as a benefactor to the peasants, and so he set out to bestow all kinds of benefactions on his villagers. This was the time when Russians began to take interest in the peasant. Turgénev had already written his *Memoirs of a Hunter*, and society was divided into two hostile camps: there were those who saw in the peasant all the Russian virtues in an inchoate state, and those who saw no salvation for the degraded, improvident, hopelessly dull villagers. Those who, like Turgénev, took the lowly agriculturist under their wing found it necessary to idealize him, while their opponents were just as busy detracting from him and representing him as devoid of progressive tendencies. Not so Tolstóy. That his ardour for his humble brothers was at least as strong as that of his literary friends is evidenced by the fact that, while they preached a common brotherhood, Tolstóy actually went among them, planned a distribution of his property to them, and later for a series of years gave himself unreservedly to instructing

the peasant children. But with his usual sincerity, he was unable to see in the peasants the ideal painted by those who preached the emancipation, nor the unconditional wretchedness which alone the adversaries depicted. With absolute frankness he details his attempts at relieving the suffering villagers by offering them superior advantages, which they reject from indolence and a sense of conservatism.

With a sickening feeling that all the dreams of his life were absurd, he walked home, only to fall into new reveries, about a woman, whom, no matter how enticing, he had to discard for the far more soothing ideal, "that love and goodness were truth and happiness, and the only truth and possible happiness in the world," and again he returned to the thought expressed by him before, that "love, self-sacrifice, — these constitute the true happiness which is independent of accident." From first to last this remains the key-note of all his actions and thoughts, and temporary failures do not reduce his zeal, but only urge him on to new endeavours. And how often he has to return to the theme of pious desires to do good to the peasants, with the invariable inability to carry his intentions to a happy issue! Pierre, and Levín, and Nekhlyú-dov in *Resurrection* all make these abortive attempts, which are quite in keeping with the dreamy, well-meant, but aimless tendencies of the Russian character. To this story, as to all the longer stories of Tolstóy, there is really no end, even as there is no end to any event in life. Rudely disappointed in one of his reveries, Nekhlyú-dov only falls into another, dreaming of a free and easy life in the open, like that of Ilyúshka the driver, and exclaiming, "Why am I not Ilyúshka?"

### III.

THE first period of Tolstóy's life closes with his flight to the Caucasus, to escape from the promptings of his baser nature and from the annoying triteness of society. "Rules of life" and the finer perception of Nekhlyúdob did not help him to curb his uncontrollable passions. He revolted against himself, and, instead of carrying his spiritual ideal to its legitimate issue, to which he carried it later, he rushed headlong into the whirlpool of riotous living, and at least externally for a whole decade did not seem to differ from any of the easy-going, reckless members of the literary fraternity of the time. In the Caucasus he plunged into the life of the camp, with its adventures, drinking bouts, festivities, and occasional hunting expeditions. The military life seemed to agree with him, and when the war broke out in 1853 between Turkey and Russia, he hastened by the way of Yásnaya Polyána to Bukarest and to the Army of the Danube. He was present at the disaster at Silistria, and then proceeded over Jassy to the Crimea, where he joined the besieged army in Sevastopol. His place was in the most dangerous Fourth Bastion, and such was his recklessness that, amidst the boom of cannon, he calmly composed his *Sevastopol in December*, and later, *Sevastopol in May* and *The Cutting of the Forest*.

The effect of his sketches from Sevastopol was tremendous. Not only did he at once become known to the reading public, but even Nicholas I. commanded that "the life of this young man be guarded." In August of the year 1855 he led his battery in the fight at the

Chérnaya, and after the capitulation of Sevastopol he was sent as a courier to St. Petersburg to carry there the general report, which he himself had been ordered to compose. Upon arriving in the capital he stopped at the house of Turgénev. The poet Fet, who after that became an intimate friend of Tolstóy, met him there, and this is what he tells of his first meeting with him.

"The next morning, as Zakhár opened the vestibule for me, I observed in the corner a short sword with an Anna ribbon.

"'Whose short sword is this?' I asked, walking toward the door of the drawing-room.

"'This way, if you please,' Zakhár said, half-aloud, pointing to the corridor on the left. 'This is the short sword of Count Tolstóy, who is sleeping in our drawing-room. Iván Sergyéevich is drinking tea in the study.'

"During the half-hour which I passed by with Turgénev we spoke in a subdued voice, for fear of waking the sleeping count.

"'He has been acting like this all the time,' Turgénev said, with a smile. 'He has come back from the battery at Sevastopol, has stopped at my rooms, and is painting the town red: carousals, gipsies, and cards the whole night long; and then, at two o'clock he falls asleep and sleeps as one dead. I have tried to hold him back, but I have given it up.'"

In spite of the respect shown to Tolstóy by Turgénev, who esteemed highly his *Childhood* and *Boyhood*, there were always frictions between the two. Any false note in a man's expressions, any deviation from absolute sincerity, was sure to provoke Tolstóy, and with his uncompromising spirit he would not let slip any opportunity to give vent to his irritation. It was only a short time after the above incident that a number of bachelor literati were gathered at the house of Nekrásov. Some political question was being discussed, and Turgénev

almost choked with anger at Tolstóy's reserved, but none the less stinging, rebukes.

"‘I cannot admit,’ said Tolstóy, ‘that what you say is your conviction. I stand with a dagger or a sword at the door, saying, “So long as I live no one shall enter here.” What a fine conviction! What you are trying to do is to conceal from one another the essence of your thoughts, and that you call a conviction.’

"‘What makes you come here?’ Turgénev said, choking, and in a voice which passed into a falsetto (this was always the case with him in a dispute). ‘This is not your camp! Go to Countess B-y B-y!’

"‘Why need I ask you where I am to go? And idle talk will not by my going be changed into convictions.’"

Upon another occasion Turgénev, beside himself with excitement, strutted through three rooms in Nekrásov's quarters, exclaiming, "I cannot stand this! I have bronchitis!"

"Bronchitis," Tolstóy grumbled, at his back, "is an imaginary disease. Bronchitis is a metal!"

Turgénev continued to strut through the three rooms, with his hands in his pockets, while Tolstóy lay on a morocco sofa in the middle room. To avert a catastrophe, Grigoróvich, who was present, went up to Tolstóy and said, "Dear Tolstóy, do not feel so agitated! You do not know how he respects and loves you!"

"I will not permit him to spite me," Tolstóy replied, with dilated nostrils. "He is purposely walking past me and wagging his democratic haunches!"

Outwardly Tolstóy at that time completely surrendered himself to the life of a society dandy. He wore a padded overcoat with a gray beaver collar, and his long, dark blond hair fell from underneath a natty hat, which he wore dashingly poised on one side, and in his hand he carried a fashionable cane, whenever he went out for a walk.

At that time the young society people considered it the right thing to busy themselves with gymnastic exercises, especially with jumping over a wooden horse. If a man wanted to see Tolstóy at about two o'clock, he needed only to go to the gymnasium on the Great Dmítrovka, where Tolstóy, dressed in tights, used to try to jump over the horse without touching a wool-stuffed leathern cone, placed on its back. In the evening he generally donned his dress suit and white tie, and attended evening parties and balls.

This was in the year 1857. During the same year he made his first journey abroad, stopping for a short time in Germany, and visiting Paris and Switzerland, where his stay at the Schweizerhof in Lucerne gave him the material for his sketch *Lucerne*. At the end of summer he was back at Yásnaya Polyána, and this is what his brother Nikoláy says of his life at that time: "Lev is seriously trying to become acquainted with country life and the management of the estate, with which he, like all of us, has so far been only superficially acquainted. I have my misgivings about the results: Lev wants to grasp everything at once, not omitting anything, not even gymnastics. For this purpose he has had a bar put up in front of his study window. Of course, if we put aside the prejudices, against which he is struggling so much, he is right: gymnastics does not interfere with the management of the estate; but the village elder looks somewhat differently upon the matter: 'I come to the master for an order,' says he, 'and he, hanging with one leg on a pole, head downwards, and wearing his red blouse, keeps swaying to and fro; his hair is flowing in the wind, his face is flushed with blood, and I stand and listen to his commands and marvel at what he is doing.' Lev has fallen in love with the way labourer Yufán spreads his arms while ploughing. And so Yufán has become for him an emblem of peasant strength, something like Mikúla Sel-

yanínovich. He himself now spreads his arms, follows the plough, and Yufanizes."

Literature at that time gave him pleasure, and he enjoyed equally Turgénev's prose and Fet's poetry. "Turgénev has gone to Winzig," he wrote to his friend Fet, "to stay there until August and cure his bladder. The devil take him! I am getting tired of loving him. He will not cure his bladder, but will cause us a loss. And now, good-bye, dear friend; if there is no poem by the time I come to see you, I will squeeze it out of you."

Yet already agriculture was beginning to interest him even more than literature, and the two were sometimes strangely intertwined. This is what he wrote to Fet:

"DARLING UNCLE FET: — Upon my word 'darling,' and I love you terribly, just terribly. That is all. It is stupid and a disgrace to write stories. To write verses . . . Do write them. But it is very agreeable to love a good man. And maybe, contrary to my will and consciousness, it is not I, but a story which is sitting within me and has not yet come to maturity, that is making me love you. At times it so seems to me. Do as you please, but 'twixt manure and hen-bane something drives me to go and compose. It is lucky I do not allow myself, and will not allow myself, to write as yet. I thank you with all my heart for your trouble about the veterinary, and so forth. I have found one in Túla, and will begin the cure at once. What will come of it, I do not know. The devil take them all, anyway. Druzhíuin begs me, as a friend, to write a story. Really, I want to write one. I will write one just to beat the band. The Shah of Persia is smoking tobacco, and I love you. That's what. Jests aside, how about your Hafiz? Twist and turn as I may, the acme of wisdom and firmness for me is only to enjoy somebody else's poetry, and not to let my own out

among people in a monstrous habiliment, and to sit down myself and eat my daily bread. However, at times I want so much to be a great man, and I feel so provoked because that has not yet come to pass! I sometimes even hasten to get up or finish my dinner, in order to begin. I cannot tell all so-called foolish things, but it is pleasant to tell at least one to such an uncle as you are, who live by nothing but so-called foolish things. Send me one most wholesome poem by Hafiz, translated by you, to *me faire venir l'eau à la bouche*, and I will send you a sample of wheat. I am dreadfully sick of the chase. The weather is fine, but I do not go out by myself."

At the end of 1857 Tolstóy had made a short visit to Paris, and, except for a few intervals at Moscow, ever after passed his time at Yásnaya Polyána. Farming operations were more and more absorbing his attention. He tried to persuade Fet to purchase an estate near his own, and in a characteristic letter to him early in the year 1860 he began by giving a detailed account of the possible profits from a farm which he wanted Fet to buy. Then he passed over to a criticism of Turgénev's latest productions, more than ever finding fault with the literary banalities of "splenetic and dyspeptic" Turgénev; then he criticized Ostróvski's *Storm*, though he predicted a success for it. "Lovers of antiques, to whom I, too, belong, are not interfered with in their desire seriously to read poems and stories and seriously to talk about them. Now is a different time. It is not for us to study, but to teach Marfútka and Taráska a little of what we know." The letter ends with a request for Fet to see a German bookseller and order some new books for him, among them also popular books on medicine and the veterinary art, and to get for him six Starbuck ploughs, and to find out what the price of clover and Timothy seed was, since he had some for sale.



In June of the same year he wrote to Fet that he felt quite despondent, because the estate, as it was being managed, pressed heavily upon him, and because the sickness of his brother, from whom he had not yet heard, worried him very much. This brother, Nikoláy, was worshipped by Lev, and Nikoláy in his turn worshipped him. Nikoláy was in every way an admirable man and was beloved by all those with whom he came in contact; but during his military service in the Caucasus he had acquired a taste for liquor, and this, combined with a weak constitution, soon began to tell on him, and when a famous doctor, whom he consulted, observed an advanced stage of consumption in him, he sent him to Soden. Lev Tolstóy, in addition to these cares, felt also out of sorts, because his "bachelor life, that is, the absence of a wife and the feeling that it was getting late," weighed heavily upon him. In the same letter he advised Fet in the purchase of an estate not to be anxious to get too much land, telling him that through his bitter experience he had come to the conclusion that sixty or seventy desyátinas of four-field land was about as much as a man could handle. Later in life he decided that even this immensely reduced area of land was entirely too great to be cultivated by one man.

Toward the end of the month Lev started abroad, for the purpose of finally joining his brother. He went by water to Stettin, remained a few days in Berlin, where he visited some lectures at the university and became greatly interested in a working men's society, in which all kinds of questions were freely discussed by the working men, stopped a day in Leipsic, to visit the schools, which were supposed to be the best in Germany, in Dresden called on Berthold Auerbach, from whose peasant stories he had received so much inspiration, and on July 20th reached Kissingen. Here he fell in with Julius Fröbel, the nephew of Friedrich Fröbel and himself an educator,

and in his company he passed much of his time, discussing general questions of education. The news that came from Soden was not encouraging: Nikoláy was failing rapidly, and toward the end of August Lev went to Soden, to take his brother to Frankfurt, and thence to the south, in the hope of prolonging Nikoláy's life. In Hyères he died in Lev's arms. This is what Lev wrote to Fet on October 17th:

"It seems to me that you already know what has happened: on September 20th, he died, literally in my arms. Nothing in my life has made such an impression upon me. He was right when he said that there is nothing worse than death. And when you come to think of this, that it is after all the end of everything, there is nothing worse than life. Why worry and try, if from what was Nikoláy Nikoláevich Tolstóy nothing is left for him? He did not say that he felt the approach of death, but I know that he watched its every step and knew for certain what was still ahead. A few minutes before his death he dozed off, and suddenly he awoke and in terror whispered: 'What is this?' He had seen it,—his absorption into nothingness. And if he did not find anything to hold on to, what shall I find? Still less. Certainly neither I nor any one else will up to the last moment struggle with it as he did. Two or three days before that I said to him, 'Some conveniences ought to be put in your room.' 'No,' he said, 'I am feeble, but not so feeble as you think, — I'll fight on.'

"Until the very last moment he did not give in, and did everything himself, tried to keep himself busy, wrote, asked me about my writings, advised me. But it seemed to me that he was not doing all that from an inner impulse, but from principle. One thing, — Nature, — that remained until the end. The day before he went to his chamber, and there from weakness fell upon his bed, near an open window. When I came, he said, with tears in

his eyes, 'How I have been enjoying myself for a whole hour!' — From earth was he taken, and to the earth he will return. One thing is left, the dim hope that there, in Nature, part of which you become in the earth, something will be left and found. All those who knew and saw his last moments say, 'How remarkably calmly and softly he died;' but I know that it was extremely painfully, because not one sensation has escaped me. A thousand times I said to myself, 'Let the dead bury the dead,' but the strength which is in us must be used in some way. It is impossible to persuade a stone to fall upwards, instead of downwards, whither it is attracted. It is impossible to laugh at a jest which has grown stale. It is impossible to eat when you do not feel like eating. What is the use of anything, if to-morrow shall begin the torments of death with all the abomination of the lie, the self-deception, and will end in nothing, in a naught for ourselves. A funny thing. Be useful, be virtuous and happy so long as you are alive, people say to one another; but you, and happiness, and virtue, and usefulness consist in truth. And the truth which I have brought away in thirty-two years is this, that the condition in which we are placed is terrible. 'Take life as it is; you have placed yourself in this position.' Indeed! I take life as it is. As soon as man shall have reached the highest degree of development, he will see clearly that everything is confusion and deception, and that the truth, which he none the less loves more than anything else, is terrible. When you see it well and clearly, you will come to your senses and you will say in terror, as my brother said, 'What is this?' But, of course, so long as there is any desire to know and speak the truth, you try to know and speak. This is all that is left to me from the moral world, above which I cannot rise. This alone will I do, but only not in the form of your art. Art is a lie, and I can no longer love a beautiful lie — I will pass the winter

here, for the reason that it makes no difference where one lives."

It was the death of the mother and of Natálya Sávisbna that closed up the period of Irténev's boyhood, and served as the turning-point for a new stage of life. So, too, the death of Nikoláy served Tolstóy as a turning-point in his frivolous society life. In his *Confession* he tells us how during this decade he committed every crime in the calendar, and yet was regarded by all as a comparatively moral man. At that time he wrote through vanity and tried to conceal the better promptings in himself. When he returned from the war, he was accepted by the literary men as their own, was flattered by them, and was furnished with a theory to justify the looseness of his morals. "Faith in the meaning of poetry and in progress in life was a creed, and I was one of its priests." Soon, however, he lost this faith and, observing the priests more closely, came to the conclusion that the literary men actually stood lower than his former riotous companions. He did not lose faith in his own worth, and continued to teach, not knowing what. His sojourn in Europe, where he associated with prominent scholars, confirmed him in his faith in perfection, in progress. An execution, which he witnessed in Paris, and the death of his brother Nikoláy, shook his faith in the infallibility of progress. Such is Tolstóy's retrospective view on the state of his mind for the period preceding his settlement in Yásnaya Polyána and his marriage.

Though in the main this confession represents the author's feelings during that time, the more than twenty years that had elapsed since the decade of transition, coupled with a strong religious self-chastisement, materially modified the current sentiments of the author. For these we must go, not to his *Confession*, but to his own writings covering that period. Of these stories, about one-half deal with military experiences and were written

down almost simultaneously with the occurrences described in them; but *The Cossacks*, though conceived in 1852, was finished in 1861, and thus, to some extent, reflects later experiences. Both the military sketches and the other stories show that as regards workmanship he really came under the sway of the literary clique. Few of the later productions show such exquisite balancing, such delicacy of language, such rhythmical motion as, for example, *Sevastopol*, *The Cossacks*, *The Snow-storm*, *Lucerne*, *Three Deaths*, and, though in Tolstóy it is never possible to detect any direct obligations and imitations, on account of the originality and power of his own genius, Tolstóy was to some extent affected by Turgénev's manner when he wrote *Three Deaths*, and *Albert* belongs to the same class of stories as those by Hoffmann or by Poe.

Outside of this purely technical influence we fail to observe any correspondence between the author's external conduct and his inward life, that is, while his spiritual existence proceeded on the same lines as laid down in his first productions and clearly represented an evolution toward his later world-conception, his outward ways, his dandyism, his belief in progress, his faith in literature and in his own mission, were never more than skin-deep and never formed a part of his real self.

*Sevastopol in December*, with its realistic description of the apparently peaceful, though busy city, the horrors of the hospital, the simple courage of the soldiers, is not intended as a glorification of carnage, but as an object-lesson in the inhumanity of war. In *Sevastopol in December*, the playing of the regimental music, the thoughts of love, the hope of advancement expressed by Staff-Captain Mikháylov, introduce us to more peaceful scenes than we are soon to hear of; and again the author tells us of the "vanity on the brink of the grave" and declares that "the literature of our age is only an endless story of snobs and vanity." This is surely in direct contrast with

the aristocratic mannerism which he then seemed to assume and of which he has been accused even in his old age. He delights in contrasting the soldiers' courage with the pusillanimity of the officers, and puts to shame Prince Gáltsin's suspicions by the simple recital of the wounded soldier who was taking to the ambulance a more seriously wounded comrade. The officers are either in deadly fear of being killed, as was the case with Mikháylov, or they are downright cowards, like Praskúkhin, or braggarts, like Pest. The motives of those who take part in war are low and contemptible: "every one of them is a Napoleon in miniature, a monster in miniature, and forthwith ready to start a battle, to kill a hundred people, merely to get an additional star, or one-third additional pay." In sharp contrast with the officers, the soldiers, both the Russian and the French, amicably converse and exchange jests during the truce. Can any one doubt that Tolstóy's abhorrence of war, though he himself was then taking part in it, was then as sincere and complete as at any subsequent time, when one reads the closing lines where he invokes men in the name of Christianity to stop killing one another? *Sevastopol in August*, which, with its sad story of the brothers Kozeltsóv, the detailed account of the life in the bastions, the depressing narration of the evacuation of the city, is more complete than the previous two sketches, only heightens the horror and tragedy of war.

In *The Cutting of the Forest* we again have the two contrasting divisions, the soldiers and the officers. For the first we get a minute classification, such as Tolstóy becomes more and more addicted to, of the various kinds of soldiers that are found in the Russian army. Of these, "the commonest type is a gentle, sympathetic type, which unites the best Christian virtues, meekness, piety, patience, and submission to the will of God." Is not that an elaboration of the character of Natályá Sávishna, and

a generalization of Platón Karatáev in *War and Peace*? With what love and artlessness the author depicts the "busily submissive Velenchúk," and the "sagacious commander," Maksímov, and the joker Chíkin, and simple-hearted Antónov, whose artless exclamation, as the ball fell within a short distance from his legs, put to shame the officers' endeavours to appear cool and unconcerned! And again it is the soldier Velenchúk, whose "last minutes were as clear and tranquil as all his life."

The types of the officers, however, are again far from attractive: we have honest Bolkhóv, who is ready to acknowledge his inability to take part in war,—his cowardice,—but who stays in the army, in order to gain a decoration and a majorship, the prerequisites of one returning from the service in the Caucasus; and Trosénko, who has served so long in the Caucasus that he has no other family than his military company, and no other home than his camp; and lying Kraft,—“a German who wants to be a good comrade.” How much more charming is the final scene, when the soldiers were assembled at the camp-fire and after the tattoo the harmonious chorus of male voices amid the deep hush of the night said the Lord's Prayer; and the foot-soldier told of his experience at Dargí; and Zhdánov, without the slightest idea of boasting, explained the necessity of his reënlisting in the army, in order not to interfere with his brothers, from whom he had not heard for many years; and Antónov sang a melancholy song, causing tears to appear on Zhdánov's face.

*A Moscow Acquaintance at the Front* is merely an incident in the military life of the Caucasus, which gives the author an opportunity to describe a profligate, fawning, dissipated scion of Moscow aristocracy. If there is any truth in the statement that Tolstóy then displayed a certain snobbery, it is evident that this aristocratic peculiarity was not directed against those who stood far below

him in the social scale, but against those whom he designated as aristocrats and whom he never could bear. At the same time he was conscious of his own failings, of his inability to control his passions, especially the passion for gambling, and this weakness apparently affected him to the extent of making him familiar with the thought of suicide. This state of his mind he transferred to Prince Nekhlyúdob in the *Memoirs of a Member*. Nekhlyúdob thought with regret of the days when his childlike, genuine feelings had discovered the right path and had been kindled to a gentle heat by the objectless power of love; but he lacked strength to extricate himself from the slough into which he was sinking, and he was assailed by the thoughts of suicide. All that agrees completely with what, to judge from his other productions of about that time, must have been Tolstóy's mental condition.

In *Albert* the author has depicted the dissipated musician, Rudolph, whom he had brought with him from Moscow. In spite of Albert's insuperable passion for liquor, his ingratitude, his childishness, Delésob, who is no other than Tolstóy, has only pity for him, for, "What business have I to mend others, when I ought to be thankful to God if I were able to get myself straightened out?" Tolstóy's faith in human nature and sympathy even for a criminal is nowhere expressed with greater emphasis than in *Polikúshka*, where the thief Polikúshka is entrusted with a sum of money, the loss of which causes him to commit suicide. The admirable sketch, *The Snow-storm*, is the only one of that period which is entirely devoid of any didactic purpose. It relates an experience in the Territory of the Don Cossacks, when the author lost his way in a blinding snow-storm. The intermingling of a dream with reality and the remarkable psychological analysis of the dream itself are themes to which he frequently returns in his later works. The



incident of the snow-storm itself was afterward used by him as a background in *Master and Workman*.

The *Two Hussars* and *Lucerne* form a group by themselves, in that they deal with the reverse sides of modern civilization. In the *Two Hussars* there are contrasted the riotous, swearing, reckless, but at the same time generous, chivalrous, whole-hearted military men of the older generation, and the refined, talented, decent, but mean, hard-hearted, and unprincipled men of the middle of the nineteenth century. The elder Túrbin is given to drunkenness, beats his servant, passes his evenings with gipsy maids, but at the same time he robs the gambler of the money, in order to give it to the poor officer from whom he has won it, and who otherwise would have blown out his brains, and acts gallantly toward the fair widow, whom he kisses, before she has opened her eyes from her sleep, to see who the intruder is. The younger Túrbin, on the contrary, is a model officer, but he unscrupulously wins the money from the same simple, unsuspecting widow and, while he enjoys her hospitality, tries to seduce her daughter. Tolstóy could much more readily put up with outward coarseness than with insincere unconscionable refinement. That was the very characteristic that he observed in the case of the cultured Englishmen, the guests of the Schweizerhof in Lucerne, who did not give as much as a penny to a poor itinerant Tyrolese singer, and even laughed at him, though they had been willing to listen to his singing. It roused Tolstóy to the highest pitch of indignation against that sham which is called civilization. Tolstóy is not easily deceived by words: civilization, freedom, equality, mean nothing to him, if people who profess these have "no heartfelt human feeling for a personal good act." He objects to civilization, because "the impeccable, blissful voice of the Universal Spirit is drowned by the boisterous, hasty development of civilization." Here we have the

succinct expression of all his future creed, — his detestation for the hypocrisy of society, his critical attitude toward civilization and progress, his positing of religion as the foundation of morality. And again he turns away from the heartless crowd of refined people to the simple singer, sitting somewhere on a threshold and singing amid the soft, fragrant night, and “in his heart there is no reproach, no malice, no regret.” And thus even the foreign Tyrolese swells the long catalogue of the simple of faith and poor in spirit who, like Natálya Sávisna, the soldier Zhdánov, Platón Karatáev, shall inherit the kingdom of God. So, too, in *Three Deaths*, the quiet death of Uncle Fédor, who in his last moments gives away his boots to driver Seréga and is anxious not to disturb any one, is sharply contrasted with the death of the peevish, recriminating society woman.

*Youth*, though dealing reminiscently with an earlier period, was finished in the same year as *Lucerne*, and so reflects both the earlier and later transitional stage of the author's life. The ardent desire to apply virtuous ideas to life, the strong religious feeling and the earnestness during the confession, the absurdity of the system of university examinations and the petty despotism of the professors, themes which he has touched upon before, here become the subjects of special discussions. Irténev's great friendship for the morally superior Nekhlyúdob is the old striving after greater perfection. In the classification of love into fair, self-sacrificing, and active, of which the latter most unselfish sentiment is placed higher than any other, we have the incipient concept of love, not as an exclusive sentiment for a certain individual, but as an all-absorbing feeling, which is in no way confined to any person. Tolstóy's early aversion to society is treated in a number of chapters, and from the manner in which he speaks of acquiring a habit of drinking and smoking, in order to appear as a grown person, he shows that his

heart never was with any of the dissipations which, in the weakness of his character, he practised at the time. Nor did that external decency, known as *comme il faut*, ever seriously affect him. It lived in him at the time when he wrote of it as a reminiscence of a brief fatuous aberration. Even during his university career, Irténev had opportunities to become acquainted with men who did not belong to the *comme il faut* circle, whose genuine worth, in spite of their rough exterior, inspired him with respect, and he soon came to the conclusion that his acquaintance with Prince So-and-so, his pronunciation of French, his linen shirt, his manicured nails, were but trifles in comparison with their earnest and persistent endeavours.

*Youth* was never completed, and we have no autobiographical record for the years intervening between Tolstóy's university career and his sojourn in the Caucasus, except *A Morning of a Landed Proprietor*, analyzed above. Of the stories dealing with the Caucasus none equals the power of *The Cossacks* in portraying that storm-and-stress period, during which the author's mind wavered between the life of an artist and that of a sternly moralizing philosopher, between activity and indolence, when every effort in any direction caused him to tear himself away from the effort in order to regain his liberty, when he gave up "his service, farming, music, to which he thought at one time of devoting himself, and even love of women, in which he did not believe." Olénin, that is Tólstoy, turns his back on Moscow, in order to begin in the Caucasus a new life, in which there shall be none of those blunders, and no remorse, and in which he certainly will be happy. Everything combined to make *The Cossacks* the most perfect artistic work produced by Tolstóy: it was conceived during the time when he submitted most to the influence of a literary tradition, it is preëminently autobiographical and sincere, it deals with incidents in a country from which the halo of romanticism had not yet

been entirely lifted, it gave the author occasion to revel in Rousseauan naturalism and primitive simplicity, and was brought to a conclusion at a time when his contempt for modern civilization had reached its highest point, from which it was never again to recede to a less vigorous arraignment.

Olénin, tired of the vapidness of society life and of his dissipation at the gaming-table, left Moscow for the Caucasus. Not until he reached the region where he found simple people, with whom he could make simple jokes, and saw the mountains in all their grandeur, did he feel at ease. The Cossacks charmed him: their naturalness was in marked contrast to the artificiality of the society he had left behind him. Their very vices were more acceptable to him than those practised among the so-called refined people. The thieving, drunkenness, lax sexual relations, which he found among the Cossacks, did not offend him, because all that was done frankly, without any of that concealment and simpering, which in more civilized centres make up a hypocritical system of outward decency. He could without hesitation form a sincere friendship with Eróshka, arch-thief, arch-hunter, and naturalistic philosopher. Eróshka lived on such intimate terms with Nature that he could tell the time of the night by the noise made by the birds, and knew what the wild sow was announcing to her young ones; he was compassionate, not only to men, but also to animals, and would not let even a moth burn her wings; he knew no distinction between Tartar, and Armenian, and Russian soldier, and Cossack; he loved, and drank, and stole, conscious of no sin; his philosophy did not extend beyond the grave, upon which the grass would grow out, to mark the end. This Eróshka is no other than Olénin-Tolstóy in the moment of his most acute revolt against society. Abstract the elemental vices of the Cossack surroundings, and what we get is the same unbounded love

of Nature and intimacy with it, the same universal pity, the same brotherhood of man, the same correspondence of a man's outer acts with the dictates of his conscience, the same opposition to what "the chanters say," which characterizes Tolstóy's later activity.

Eróshka's philosophy is food for Olénin's thoughts: from Eróshka's statements he deduces the fact that "the desire for happiness is inborn in man; consequently it is legitimate." Happiness, he continued to reason, consists in love, in self-sacrifice, in living for others. And so we come back to the fundamental note of Tolstóy's philosophy. Olénin felt that "he could not live entirely Eróshka's life, because his happiness was of a different nature, — he was restrained by the thought that happiness consisted in self-renunciation." The doubling of Tolstóy as Eróshka and Olénin is the same as that in the case of Irténev and Nekhlyúdov, except that now it represents the more vigorous struggle of youth. Then Maryánka, the "majestic woman in her pristine beauty, as the first woman must have issued from the hands of the Creator," crossed his path, and he fell in love with her, and for a moment it seemed to him that the self-renunciation which had been uppermost in his mind was only a refuge against love. For a moment he wavered and was ready to cast his philosophy to the winds, but Maryánka rejected him, and the episode of a momentary weakness came to an end.

It has been remarked that Tolstóy never experienced that romantic sensation of love of which the novelists prate. That accusation is certainly just: the young women who fall in love are by him always represented as carried away by a momentary infatuation; they are unable for any length of time, in the absence of their fiancés, to devote their love to those to whom they are betrothed, and invariably bestow their hearts upon undeserving persons. However, he does not mean to represent

them as fickle, but wants to point out the inferiority and inconstancy of the mere sexual instinct, which is not permanently directed upon one person, and substitutes for this uncertain sentiment called love the far more ennobling feeling of motherhood. So, too, the mere sexual love for a woman is by a man to be kept in abeyance for the greater love of woman as a mother. This conception is for the first time uttered with full force in *Domestic Happiness*. The plot of the story, is, of course, a novelistic reproduction of Tolstóy's own experience, not actual but potential, in that he later married a woman many years younger than himself. Sergyéy Mikháylych is the same Olénin-Tolstóy, who has tasted all the bitterness of what is called life, but Másha is after her marriage made to demand what she thinks to be the broader life of the city, and so the two repair to the capital and abroad, and Másha lives in a whirl of worldly pleasures, to come out chastened and return with Sergyéy Mikháylych to the country, to live in the bosom of Nature. To Másha's question why, if he had loved her, he had allowed her for so many years to live in a society of shams, he says: "All of us, but especially you women, must in person live through all the nonsense of life in order to return to life itself." A new life began for Másha, but "the old sentiment became a precious, irretrievable reminiscence, and a new feeling of love for the children, and for the father of the children, laid the foundation for another, an entirely different and happy life."

#### IV.

AFTER the death of his brother, Tolstóy passed another six months in the West. After visiting Italy he went by way of Marseilles to Paris, everywhere observing the common people and studying the conditions of popular education. From Paris he ran over to London, where he was fortunate enough to hear Lord Palmerston deliver a three-hour speech in the parliament. He went home by way of Brussels, where he made the acquaintance of Proudhon and the Polish historian Lelewel, stopped at Weimar, where he investigated the Fröbel kindergartens, once more called on Berthold Auerbach in Dresden, went to Berlin, where he met Diesterweg, and from there back to Russia. After a brief stay in St. Petersburg, he went on May 10th to Yásnaya Polyána, two days later petitioned the government to be permitted to open a school for the peasant children, and took an active part in the allotment of land to the newly emancipated peasantry, in the capacity of mediator of the peace, an office established by the government for the adjustment of the land question.

It was soon after his return to Yásnaya Polyána that a rupture took place between him and Turgénev. It happened under the following circumstances. Fet, following Tolstóy's advice, had bought the estate of Stepánovka, which was but a short distance away from Yásnaya Polyána. Turgénev and Tolstóy were invited to pass a few days with Fet. On the second morning of their visit, the company was assembled at the tea-table, and during the conversation which ensued, Fet's wife asked Turgénev whether he was satisfied with his English gov-

erness, to whom he had entrusted the education of his daughter. Turgénev showered praises on the governess, and among other things said that she had with English punctuality asked him to determine the precise sum which he wished to put into the hands of his daughter for charitable purposes. Fet reports the subsequent event as follows:

“‘Now,’ said Turgénev, ‘the governess wants my daughter to take poor people’s old clothes and mend them for the people.’

“‘And this you consider good?’ asked Tolstóy.

“‘Of course. This brings the benefactress into contact with actual want.’

“‘But I think that a dressed-up miss who is holding in her lap dirty and ill-smelling rags is only playing an insincere, theatrical part.’

“‘I ask you not to say this!’ Turgénev shouted, with dilated nostrils.

“‘Why should I not say what I am convinced of?’ replied Tolstóy.

“Before I had a chance to call out ‘stop’ to Turgénev, he, mad with anger, exclaimed: ‘If so, I will make you stop by insulting you.’ With these words he jumped up from the table and, clutching his hair, walked excitedly into the next room. A second later he came back and said, turning to my wife, ‘For God’s sake, pardon my monstrous conduct, which I regret deeply.’ Thereupon he went out again.”

It was not merely Turgénev’s sudden excitability that had caused this sally, but also a rankling feeling that Tolstóy was outgrowing him. “Turgénev cannot make his peace with the thought that Lev is growing and getting away from his guardianship,” is what Nikoláy Tolstóy once said about Turgénev. On the other hand, Tolstóy’s retort was entirely in keeping with his character: he could not bear anything that was false and in-



sincere, and he never let slip an opportunity of giving vent to his indignation. The strained relations between the two great authors lasted until the year 1878, when Tolstóy extended his hand of forgiveness to his elder friend, and the whole incident was forgotten.

For two years Tolstóy devoted himself exclusively to his village school, for which he employed four students of the university, and a German, Keller, whom he had met in Jena during his European journey. The manner in which he conducted his school is amply discussed in his pedagogical essays, and to this we shall return later. His pedagogical ideas he developed in the periodical *Yásnaya Polyána*, which he himself edited. Meanwhile his old weakness for the gaming-table came back to him, and heavy losses thus incurred caused him to borrow one thousand roubles of the editor of the *Russian Messenger* as an advance payment for the *Cossacks*, which was not yet quite finished.

During his visits to Moscow he was a frequent visitor at Doctor Behrs's, whose three daughters seemed to have equal attraction for him. Doctor Behrs was a German of the Baltic provinces who had married the daughter of Islénev, a neighbour of the Tolstóys. For this Mrs. Behrs, who was but a year older than Tolstóy, Tolstóy had had a considerable affection when they both were little children, and now he transferred his attention to the younger generation of the Behrs. When the family removed for the summer to the suburban estate of Pokróvskoe, he frequently passed whole days there. During the summer of 1862 he took two of his best peasant pupils with him to Samára, going there from Nízhni-Nóvgorod by boat, to undergo a kumys cure. He was barely back home, when the family of the Behrs, on their way to the not very distant estate of the Islénevs, stopped for a few days at Yásnaya Polyána. They had just reached their own destination, when Tolstóy arrived on the scene.

Here he proposed to Sofíya, the second daughter, in precisely the same manner in which Levín made his proposal to Kitty. The engagement was kept secret for a time, and on September 23d they were married. On October 9th he wrote to Fet: "I have been married these two weeks, and I am happy, and a new, an entirely new man."

For the winter the newly married pair went to Moscow, stopping at Hotel Chevrier, formerly Chevalier. In the spring they were back in the country. The *Cossacks* and *Polikúshka*, which then appeared, evoked a mass of very favourable criticism, and Turgénev, in spite of his personal difference with Tolstóy, went into transports over them. In reply to a notice of these productions by Fet, Tolstóy wrote: "*Polikúshka* is the prattling on any chance subject by a man who 'indeed wields the pen,' and the *Cossacks* is 'juicy,' though poor stuff. Now I am writing the story of a piebald gelding; I shall have it printed by autumn, I think. However, how can I write now? Now even the invisible efforts are visible, and, besides, I am up to my ears in Yufanizing. Sónya is with me. We have no superintendent; we have only assistants in our agricultural labour and building operations, and she runs the office and the cash-box. I have bees, and sheep, and a new orchard, and a distillery. Everything goes well, though, of course, poorly in comparison with the ideal. What do you think of the Polish affairs? Things are bad! Shall we not be obliged to take the sword down from the rusty nail?" In reply to Fet's jest about Tolstóy's wife, who was so many years younger than her husband, Tolstóy again wrote to him in May: "My wife is not playing with dolls at all. Do not insult her. She is a serious helpmate of mine, and that, too, while she is carrying a burden, which she hopes to be relieved of in the beginning of July. What will come later? We are Yufanizing a bit. I have made an



*Countess Tolstoy.*



important discovery, which I hasten to inform you of. Clerks and superintendents and elders are only a nuisance on an estate. Try to chase away all the managers and to sleep until ten o'clock, and things will certainly not go worse. I have made this experiment, and I am well satisfied with it."

Shortly afterward Fet visited the Tolstóys, and this is his account of the meeting: "I had just turned in between the towers, down the birch avenue, when I came upon Lev Nikoláevich, who was directing the drawing out of a seine along the whole length of a pond, and who was apparently taking every precaution to prevent the escape of the crucians, which concealed themselves in the ooze and rushed past the wings of the seine, without paying any attention to the furious snapping of the ropes and even axles.

"‘Oh, how glad I am!’ he exclaimed, obviously dividing his attention between me and the crucians, ‘Just a minute! Iván! Iván! Pull the left wing in more sharply! Sónya, have you seen Afanási Afanásevich?’

"But this remark was apparently belated, for the countess, all dressed in white, had run up to me in the avenue, and continuing to run as fast, with an enormous bunch of household keys in her belt, and without paying any attention to her extremely advanced condition, had gone on in the direction of the pond, jumping over the slats of a low fence.

"‘What are you doing, countess?’ I exclaimed in terror. ‘How careless you are!’

"‘Never mind,’ she answered, with a pleasant smile, ‘I am used to it.’

"‘Sónya, tell Nésterka to bring a bag from the storehouse, and let us go home.’

"The countess immediately separated an immense key from her belt and handed it to a boy, who started on a run to carry out the demand.

"‘Here,’ said the count, ‘you see a complete application

of our method: she keeps the keys and carries on all household operations by means of boys.'

"At the animated dinner there appeared the crucians which had been caught in our presence. Everybody seemed to be equally at ease and happy. This evening could justly be called full of hopes. It was worth seeing with what pride and bright hope the eyes of the good aunt Tatyána Aleksándrovna watched the dear nephew and his wife and, turning to me, spoke clearly, 'You see, of course, things cannot be different with *mon cher Léon*.'

"As to the young countess, the life of one in her condition, who jumps over fences, cannot help but be illumined with joyous hopes. The count himself, who had passed all his life in the search of novelty, during this period apparently entered into an unknown world, in the powerful future of which he believed with all the infatuation of an artist. I myself, carried away by the general tone of unbounded happiness, did not on that evening feel the stone of Sisyphus which was weighing heavily upon me."

In 1863 the rehabilitation of many exiles who had been sent to Siberia after the December revolt of 1825 revived the interest in that incident, and Tolstóy, too, began to busy himself with collecting material for a novel, *The Decembrists*, which, however, he never finished. During his research, he was taken back to the period preceding the revolt, and thus there ripened in him the desire to treat the great War of 1812. The subject grew upon him as he proceeded. He began with depicting the period preceding even the year of the French invasion under the name of *The Year 1805*. In the beginning of 1865 he wrote to Fet: "Do you know what a surprising thing I have to tell you about myself? When my horse threw me, and I broke my arm, and I awoke from my swoon, I said to myself 'I am a litterateur.' And I am a litterateur, only a lonely litterateur, and all in the dark. In a

few days will appear the first half of the first part of *The Year 1805*. Please give me your detailed opinion about it. I value your opinion and that of another man, whom I dislike in proportion as I am getting big, — Turgénev. He will understand it. What I have printed heretofore I consider only a trial of the pen; though I like what I am having printed now better than anything written by me before, it seems to me to be weak, as an introduction must be. What will be later, I tremble to think. Write me what they say in the various places where you are acquainted, and, above all, how it affects the crowd. No doubt it will pass unnoticed. I expect and wish that; if only they will not call me names, for scolding upsets me."

In May he wrote: "I am writing now and then, and I am satisfied with my work. The snipes still attract me, and every evening I shoot at them, that is, past them. My farming is going well, that is, it does not bother me much, — I have everything I ask from it. So much about myself. To your request to say something about the Yásnaya Polyána school I answer in the negative. Though your arguments are just, the periodicals have forgotten about it, and I do not want to bring it up, not because I have renounced anything I have said about it, but, on the contrary, because I do not cease thinking of it, and, if God grants me life, I hope from all that to make a book, with the conclusion at which I have arrived after three years of impassioned preoccupation with this matter. . . . Our agricultural affairs are now like the business of a shareholder who has shares that have lost their value and are not taken on Exchange. Of late I have been satisfied with my affairs, but the general course of things, that is, the imminent famine calamity of the masses, torments me more and more with every day. It is so strange, and even bad and terrible: at our table we have pink radishes, yellow butter, tinted soft bread on a

clean table-cloth, the trees are green in the orchard, our young women wear muslin dresses and enjoy the heat and the shade, and there that evil demon Hunger is doing his work, covering the fields with orache, opening cracks in the parched earth, blistering the callus-covered heels of the peasant men and women, and splitting the horses' hoofs."

*War and Peace* proceeded slowly, the chief obstacle being the double problem set to himself by Tolstóy, of developing the historical plot by the side of the action of the characters. The parts as they appeared were received by the literary men in Russia with mingled feelings of delight and disappointment. His reputation became firmly established. Eugene Schuyler, who visited Tolstóy in 1868, tells of the excellent library which the author had in his possession and which dealt with Napoleon and his time. He not only investigated historical documents for his novel, but even went down to the battle-field at Borodinó, in order to get the local colouring. At the same time he was interested in philosophy and was carried away by Schopenhauer. "Do you know what happened to me this summer?" he wrote to Fet. "A continuous transport before Schopenhauer, and a series of spiritual pleasures which I never experienced before. I have ordered all his works and I have been reading them (I have also read Kant through). I am sure, not one student has during his course studied and learned so much as I have I during the present summer. I do not know whether I shall ever change my mind, but now I am certain that Schopenhauer is one of the most genial of men. You said that he had just written something or other on philosophical questions. Just something or other? Why, this is a whole world in an incredibly clear and beautiful reflection. I have begun translating him. Won't you, too, take hold of the translation? We could get him out together. As I read him I marvel how it is his name



could have remained unknown for so long a time. There is but one explanation, the one which he frequently repeats, that besides idiots there is hardly any one in the world."

Shortly afterward he announces that he is reading a great deal of Shakespeare, Göthe, Púshkin, Gógol, and Molière, and that he has given up reading periodicals and newspapers, to his great advantage. The drama for a while absorbed all his attention. "This whole winter I have been busying myself with the drama in general, and as always happens with people who up to their fortieth year have not thought of a certain subject and have formed no idea about it, and suddenly with a clearness which comes with forty years direct their attention upon a fresh subject, it seems to me that I see in it much that is new. The whole winter I have been enjoying myself by lying down, falling asleep, playing bézique, walking on snow-shoes, skating, and for the most part lying in bed (sick), when the characters of a drama or comedy begin to act. And they act very well. . . . I should also like to read Sophocles and Euripedes." In December of 1870 Tolstóy had proceeded sufficiently in the study of Greek to materialize his wish: "I am studying Greek from morning until night. I am not writing anything, because I am studying. To judge from the information which has reached me, your hide, offered as a parchment for my diploma of Greek, is in danger: incredible and unusual, —but I have read through Xenophon, and now I read him at random. But for Homer there is need of a dictionary and of some exertion. I am impatiently waiting to show this trick to somebody; but how happy I am that God has sent this madness on me. In the first place, I am enjoying myself; in the second place, I have convinced myself that of everything truly beautiful and simply beautiful produced by the human word I did not know anything before, just as all pretend to know it, but do not

understand it; in the third, I am sure, I do not and will not write any wordy bosh. *Peccavi*, but upon my word, I never shall again. For the Lord's sake, explain to me why nobody knows Æsop's fables, nor even charming Xenophon, to say nothing of Plato, of Homer, who are still ahead for me. As much as I can judge even now, Homer has only been defiled by our translations, which are taken from the German model. A trite, but involuntary comparison: boiled and distilled water and water from a spring, which affects the teeth, with the sparkle and the sun and even the motes, which only make it purer. All these Vosses and Zhukóvskis sing in a syrupy, guttural, and fawning voice. But that devil sings, and shouts from a full breast, and it has never occurred to him that any one may hear him. You may triumph: without the knowledge of Greek there is no culture. But what knowledge? How is it to be acquired? What is it good for? For all that I have arguments which are as clear as day."

Tolstóy's health had never been very good, and his predisposition to consumption—he had lost two brothers by that disease—had once before caused him to go to Samára for the purpose of undergoing a kumys cure. He had continued this cure at home, manufacturing his own kumys, a malodorous ferment, which he kept close to his study. In June of 1871 his wife insisted upon his going once more to Samára, as his health was again failing. While living among the Bashkirs, whose simplicity and naturalness he admired greatly, he read Herodotus, and imagined that in the Bashkirs he recognized those very Scythians of whom the Greek author spoke. The virgin newness of the country attracted him, and he thought seriously of purchasing an estate there. After his return to Yásnaya Polyána he once more opened a peasant school, in which he himself and his wife and children acted as teachers. As early as 1868, when Eugene

Schuyler visited him, he had been working on the composition of primers, as the existing ones seemed to him to be written in a poor language and to be beyond the children. At his request, Schuyler provided for him a number of American school-books, which aided him materially in his undertaking. These primers, four in number, containing original short stories, among them the *Prisoner of the Caucasus*, and a mass of translations and adaptations, he finished soon after he had again opened school. He put his whole soul into this matter, as he himself said, adding, changing, and correcting for a long time. Such is the simplicity and straightforwardness of the diction in the stories contained in these primers, that they even now form the best parts of Russian primers for the public schools.

At the same time he began to write *Anna Karénin*, "a work which is near to my heart," as he wrote at the time. Turgénev, who heard of Tolstóy's new literary work, hoped that there would not be any philosophy in it. Tolstóy's life was fully occupied with his work on his great novel, teaching school, and instructing his children in Greek and mathematics, attending to his agricultural labours, and now and then going out with an axe to fell trees or with a scythe to mow with the peasants. After eleven years of married life, death for the first time visited Tolstóy's home: he lost two children in rapid succession, and a little later his aunt passed away. Samára was visited several summers, the wide steppes and their inhabitants having an ever increasing attraction for him. "These two months I have not soiled my hands with ink or my heart with thoughts. Now I am once more taking up tiresome, sickening *Anna Karénin* with the one desire as quickly as possible to make room for myself,—to find time for other occupations, anything but pedagogical, which I love, but wish to give up. They take up too much of my time. I want to talk to you about many,

many things, but I cannot write about them. One must live, as we did, in the healthy wilderness of Samára, see this struggle of the nomad life (of millions upon enormous extents of territory) with the primitive agricultural life, which is taking place under our very eyes, feel all the significance of this struggle, to become convinced that, if more than one, there are three rapidly running and loudly shouting destroyers of the social order, that this social order is the disease of a parasite of the living oak, that the oak is not concerned about the parasite, — that this is not smoke, but a shadow which is running away from the smoke. Why my fate has taken me there, I do not know; but I do know that I have heard speeches in the English parliament (this, you know, is considered to be very important), and I felt annoyed and tired; while there, though there are flies, dirt, Bashkir peasants, I with tense respect and awe look and listen, and feel that everything there is important.”

A change was slowly taking place in Tolstóy. The expressions of the critics interested him less and less, and he failed to become enthusiastic over the French translation of his works made by Turgénev and Madame Viardot. Again it was death, not so much the death of his children, as his own, which he anticipated within a short time, that closed the third period of his activity, during which his great novels, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénin*, were produced. On April 29, 1876, Tolstóy wrote to Fet:

“From one of your last letters, in which I overlooked the phrase, ‘I wanted to call you to see me go away,’ which you wrote in the midst of a discussion on the feeding of horses, and which I have only just now grasped, I have transferred myself into your condition, which is comprehensible and very near to me, and I feel sorry for you. Both according to Schopenhauer and our conscience, compassion and love are one and the same thing, — and I wanted to write to you. I thank you for your idea of

calling me to see you pass away, when you thought that the end was near. I will do the same, when I get ready to go *there*, if I shall have enough strength to think. I would need no one so much at that moment as you and my brother. Before death the communion with men who in this life look beyond its confines is dear and joyous; and you and those rare, real men whom I have met on a close footing in life, in spite of their wholesome relation to life, always stand on the very brink and see life clearly, for the very reason that they look, now into Nirvana, into unlimitedness, into the unknown, now into sansara, and this looking into Nirvana strengthens their vision. But worldly people, no matter how much they may speak of God, are disagreeable to men of our calibre and must be painful in the time of death, because they do not see what we see, namely, that God, more indefinite, more distant, but higher and more indubitable, as it says in that article. You are ill and you think of death; but I am well, and I do not stop thinking of the same and preparing for it. Let us see who will be first. But suddenly, from various imperceptible data, it has become clear to me how deeply related your nature, your soul (especially in relation to death), is to me, so that I have suddenly come to appreciate our relations and have begun more than ever to hold them dear. Much of what I have been thinking I have tried to express in the last chapter of the April number of the *Russian Messenger* (in the seventh part of *Anna Karénin*)."

## V.

TOLSTÓY had from his earliest youth been sensitive to every false note and sham in our so-called civilization, and had taken every occasion to point out its flaws. But it was only when he directed his attention to school matters, and thus turned away from the activity of the artistic litterateur, whose opposition to the existing order had been taken by his contemporaries as a mere freak of a genius, as a desire to introduce something new and startling, that he was confronted with the necessity of establishing his views on a philosophic basis and proving his arguments and paradoxes. He at once defined the programme of his periodical, *Yasnaya Polyána*, in a leading article, *On Popular Education*, and from this programme he has never departed, though he has extended it, so as to include many other than purely pedagogical principles.

"Popular education" was the watchword of all those who claimed to be liberal, and to question the panacea of popular education was tantamount to aligning oneself with obscurantism. But Tolstóy was not carried away by words. Popular education! Very well. But why are the masses always opposed to receiving what is recognized as a boon, and why has it to be made compulsory? So popular education, like the army, like government, like the state religion, which are many years afterward brought into the circle of his vision, is based on violence, and what is born of violence cannot be beneficial. The freedom of the school has been the desideratum of philosophers from Plato to Kant, but in enforcing individual ideas, the school has every time been made an instrument of com-

pulsion, and has thus failed of its purpose. No wonder it creates scientific parrots, morally irresponsible boobies, living machines, and becomes, "not a shepherd for the flock, but a flock for the shepherd."

The real school is life, which is unhampered by any pedagogical sophistries, and for this reason the labouring classes learn their lessons in the theatre, the café chantant, the dram-shops, and prefer *The Three Musketeers* and *Monte Cristo* to books written in a scientific lingo. Tolstóy has frequently been proclaimed a visionary, and yet so many of his educational ideas have since his day been realized, at least in America, that there is no reasonable ground to assume that his other pedagogical principles, though untried, are unsound. The elective system of education, which is extending down and lower in the educational hierarchy, the extension of library and laboratory facilities, the wide use to which popular lectures are put, the correspondence schools, the university extension,—all have come since the day Tolstóy preached the absolute, not the historical, freedom of the school. That the safety of the state depends upon the education of its citizens is a trite saying in America, but that is a sentiment which Tolstóy would emphatically reject, because such education is compulsory and leads to slavish obedience. He wants for education a much wider scope, for "education, in its widest sense, including the bringing up, is that activity of man which has for its base the need of equality and the invariable law of educational progress." In other words, equality, the brotherhood of man, is the final and only aim of education, as it is of religion.

Passing to particular points in education, the author casts a flood of light upon subjects which, by the modern so-called science of pedagogy, are left as densely obscure as ever. He scathingly arraigns that pedagogy which still looks upon the lower school as a nursery for the higher institutions of learning, thus practising the most irksome

violence against the whole mass of pupils, in order to send an insignificant minority to the higher schools. In *On the Teaching of the Rudiments* he demands that the pupils of the lowest schools be given a useful education, fitting them for life, without considering whether or no it fits them for the universities. Alas, our public schools still insist on cramming into the heads of the poor children the capital of Nepaul, and intricate problems on deferred payments, and the difference between the republican and the democratic parties, subjects utterly unadapted to tender years! The worst of it is, that the "child is asked to comprehend in precisely the same manner that the teacher comprehends it," whereas all methods of instructing the rudiments are equally bad and equally good. Then Tolstóy proceeds to analyze the absurd method of object-teaching and the torture known as reading by sounds, and points out that frequently the old method of giving special names to letters, without any obvious relation to their sounds, has produced just as good results as any of the new-fangled methods of pedagogy. The teacher must know all methods and apply them in accordance with the individual cases. Every method is only a step and, "as the business of teaching is an art, completeness and perfection are not obtainable, while development and perfectibility are endless." In this last sentence the error of modern pedagogy and the philosophy of the real pedagogy are admirably defined. It is because pedagogy deems itself to be a science and capable of perfection that it blunders so egregiously. If it recognized the striving toward an impossible absolute perfection as its goal, it would be less doctrinaire and more liberal. On the other hand, we have here a particular case of Tolstóy's later complete system of perfectionism, whether religious, moral, or social: it is a striving toward an absolute, finitely impossible perfection, not the possession of it, which would be death.



In a *Project of a General Plan for the Establishment of Popular Schools* Tolstóy gives a telling blow to the paternal system of the establishment of popular schools by the government. After pointing out the fact that Russia cannot develop educationally along the same lines as America, he scrutinizes the governmental *Project*, lays bare its glittering generalities, indicates the hopelessness of any reform coming from above, and finally launches into an illustration of the manner in which the peasants would execute the school law. He predicts that every provision of the *Project* would become a mere farce; that the peasants would see nothing in the establishment of the schools but a method for imposing a new tax upon them. More than forty years have passed since that prediction was made, and every word of it has proven true,—so intimate was his acquaintance with the peasant mind and his knowledge of the devious ways of the government.

In the essay *Education and Culture* Tolstóy further develops the idea that education is only a species of violence, and draws a distinction between culture, which is free, and education, which is “the tendency toward moral despotism raised to a principle.” This condemnation covers all institutions of learning, including the universities which, since they are not entirely free, have no other basis than arbitrariness and do not widely differ from the monastic schools. The universities, a dislike for which he had expressed in *Youth*, and which, as the seat of pseudo-scientific learning, he later in life treated with even greater contempt, are to him no better than the female boarding-schools, inasmuch as they both alienate the students from the influences of home, widening the gap between the educated and the lower classes. This alienation begins in the gymnasium and even in the popular schools, and grows in proportion as the so-called higher learning is acquired. The contempt expressed by

Tolstóy in *Youth* for the professors of a Russian university is here formulated as due to the feeling of abhorrence for the dogma of the professor's infallibility. For the university lectures he has little love, since they admit of no discussion by the students and since it is frequently easier and more convenient to acquire knowledge through the medium of books. A real university is "a collection of men for the purpose of their mutual culture."

In summing up his argument, Tolstóy comes to the conclusion that public lectures, museums, are the best examples of schools without interference in education, while the universities are not. To make the university free, not only must the student be free to choose subjects of instruction for himself, but the teacher must be allowed to teach, not merely as he pleases, but also what he pleases. The definite appointment of a teacher to lecture on a certain small part of some subject is as injurious as any other kind of violence. Here again a comparison with what has been done since in the United States in the matter of emancipating education from the bonds of violence will show the far-sightedness of Tolstóy. Many of his suggestions have been realized in institutions of higher learning. The lecture is not, as in Germany and Russia, the only means for imparting knowledge. Every good teacher knows how to temper his dictum with that discussion which is the essence of good instruction. Unfortunately, however, some of the universities, in their desire to equal the German schools, are falling back into the sin of lecturing. The practical side of education and the articulation with the life of the family is to some extent fostered by the agricultural, technical, industrial schools, by the correspondence schools and the university extensions, the latter being a feeble representation of what Tolstóy regards as a real university. Where so many suggestions of the author have to some degree been realized in life, it is fair to assume that his other sugges-

tions, though still untried, will prove equally fertile of results.

In pointing out the parallelism between the American methods and Tolstóy's theories, I do not by any means insist on their identity. There is, in spite of the great resemblance, a vast difference between them. Tolstóy's theories are the logical deductions of a central idea, non-interference in education, the abolition of violence, not only in pedagogy, but in life in general. All these deductions every time correspond to the demands of reason, and have little to do with practical issues. According to the Russian conception, the practical issues must be accommodated to the dictates of reason. In the American system, the practical necessities call for reforms, and these are made without any uniform principle, change with every new demand, and stand isolated. Though apparently the same results are achieved as those aimed at by the preaching of Tolstóy, the Anglo-Saxon method of practical issues lacks the philosophical stability of the non-compromising Russian philosophy, while, on the other hand, the extreme logical deductions of Tolstóy's theories frequently fail to gain adherents on account of their disregard of existing conditions. Ultimately, however, it is the Tolstóyan system which must prevail, if education is not signally to suffer defeat.

The Russian pedagogues, educated in the German methods, took exception to Tolstóy's advanced views, which to them could not appear otherwise than heretical, and to one of these Tolstóy felt himself constrained to answer in a special article, *Progress and the Definition of Education*. This is not only a clear presentation of the subject of free education, but also summarizes his opposition to so-called progress, an opposition from which he has never receded. What Markóv, his opponent, brought up against Tolstóy was the claptrap of pedagogical science, — the demands of the time, historical evolution, progress.

But our author is not to be stormed by high-sounding words: he wants a formula by which the demands of the time can be precisely determined, — none such exists; to him historical evolution is merely a justification of the present order of things; progress, — but is progress universal and beneficial? The Chinese have not had any progress in the European sense of the word, and the Europeans have tried to introduce progress there by means of powder and cannon-balls. The masses of the people, in Russia as well as elsewhere, have always been opposed to it. It is only the upper classes, who preach the fetish of progress, that are benefited by the invention of printing, by literature, by the telegraph, the railways, the steamboats, and not the peasants, who are in no need of all these advantages of progress.

Here we meet for the first time with Tolstóy's economic ideas, which are these, that the Russian peasants cannot be gauged by the laws which lie at the foundation of political economy in the West. To the Russian agriculturist wages are not the measure of well-being. For them well-being consists in the increase of the powers of the soil and other agricultural factors. None of these are advanced by so-called progress. At the same time, it is the masses that form the most important part of the people: in them there is more force than in generations of barons, bankers, and professors. The progress of civilization is one of the most violent evils, and the progress of well-being is for the most part opposed to the progress of civilization. It must be recalled that this was enunciated by Tolstóy long before E. Carpenter declared civilization to be a disease, and independently of and previous to Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* and books of a similar turn. There are few views, held by Tolstóy, that have not at one time or another been enunciated by some European writer, but none have so persistently taken up a stand against so-called civilization and progress as

Tolstóy, and none have with such unabating zeal and with such oneness of purpose hunted down everything which bears upon itself the impress of violence. Even the usual relation of the educator to the educated is repulsive to him, and he establishes a new principle of education, namely, that education is the activity of man which has for its base the need of equality and the invariable law of educational progress. Thus the final aim of education is to equalize the pupil with the teacher, and education, as regards the educator, comes to an end when the pupil has become equal with his teacher.

So convinced has Tolstóy always been that there is more strength and original genius in the peasant class than in other classes, that he set out to prove that even the peasant children could teach us how to compose themes. This thought he developed in an article entitled, *Are the Peasant Children to Learn to Write from Us? Or, Are We to Learn from the Peasant Children?* In trying to teach the peasant children how to write compositions, Tolstóy soon discovered, as he thought, that the children have better ideas of the entity of the story, far more correctly and naturally develop the plot, and express themselves in much better language, than do authors of the literary class. The history of the creation of a number of compositions is unfolded to us as it took place under Tolstóy's guidance, and with an enthusiasm of surprise is pointed out to us the marvellous superiority of the child mind over that of maturer years. It has been remarked that what the peasant children did was, under the suggestive influence of Tolstóy himself, to create in his own style, thus evoking his admiration and transport. But this accusation is hardly just. The critics have been misled by Tolstóy's Rousseauan attitude as regards the perfection of the natural man to assume that this bias, and not the actual facts, lies at the base of Tolstóy's utterances. Indeed, he himself says in this essay that

Rousseau's statement that "Man is born perfect," remains firm and true as a rock. Proceeding from this, he argues that man's perfection lies behind, and not in front of him, and that the child is nearer to the original harmony than is man. Education is not a development of the harmony, but its progressive arrest. If this proposition is correct, then it follows that a child must be more artistic than man, for beauty, truth, and goodness express only the harmony of relations.

Still, however logical the conclusion may be, the average person will deny the fact that the child is born perfect and that education ruins this harmony. If so, let us turn to Tolstóy's riper judgment as expressed in *What Is Art?* There he makes sincerity one of the most important criterions of an artistic production. Now, sincerity is certainly to a greater extent found in children than in grown people. What makes us doubt the possibility of child perfection is the fact that we are in the habit of considering the adulterated art, which looks upon form and expression as the only points worthy of note, as the only art to be inculcated upon the children. With Tolstóy, it is simplicity, naturalness, sincerity, that are the characteristics of real art, and these are possessed by children much more than by those who are corrupted by life. The main point, then, in teaching children to write is not to spoil them, not to distract their attention by remarks about the cleanliness of their copy-books, or about their penmanship, orthography, structure of sentences, and logic. In other words, the greater the freedom of the instruction, the better the results.

This Tolstóy tried to illustrate in his own case by describing in detail the work done in the school established by him (*The School at Yásnaya Polyána for the Months of November and December, 1862*). His experiments are summed up in the following statement: "I am convinced that the school ought not to interfere in that part of the

education which belongs to the family; that the school has no right and ought not to reward and punish; that the best police and administration of a school consist in giving full liberty to the pupils to study and settle their disputes as they know best." Of course, he did not always carry out his own principles, as old habits proved too strongly ingrained to be entirely cast aside. None the less, what he attempted to do was to make the school absolutely free. Of the many practical suggestions based on the freedom of instruction, where the children are not compelled to attend to their lessons or to preserve any order, none is probably more significant than this, that in the ordinary schools the teacher strives after the method of instruction which makes the teaching and the management easiest for him, whereas the more convenient the instruction is for the teacher, the more inconvenient it is for the pupils, and only that instruction is correct which satisfies the pupils. By this criterion the public schools of America, in spite of their vaunted superiority, stand condemned, and the frightful mediocrity and low standard of their pupils are at once explained. The American teacher, if he is not of the machine-made, "Normal" kind, will find a treasury of valuable information in the pages of this article; but again there is danger in the application of this method of disorder, if, in Anglo-Saxon fashion, it is not adapted as a whole, but only as a series of practical suggestions.

Incidentally we get in this essay two views, one on the Bible, the other on art, which deserve more than a passing notice, as they indicate the early trend of his mind in the direction of an intimate study and love of Scripture and the early stage of his negative attitude toward modern art, as expressed later in *What Is Art?* Tolstóy found that there was no book which interested his pupils so much as the Bible, and that there was no production that united all the sides of human thought in

such a compressed poetical form as is to be found in the Bible. He wished to use the Bible as a model for all manuals and readers for children, and declared that an idiomatic translation of the Bible would be the best popular book and would be an epoch in the history of the Russian nation. As to art, Tolstóy even then recognized that the art of cultured society is all false, and that there is more real art in the popular chap-book illustrations, inasmuch as they evoke a moral sentiment, whereas the Venus de Milo rouses in the masses nothing but a legitimate loathing for the nakedness and shamelessness of the woman. Similarly he found more real music in the popular songs than in Beethoven's quartette, and said that both Beethoven and Púshkin "flatter our freaky irritability." For this reason, in teaching young people and the masses music, the knowledge of the common laws of music possessed by us, and not the false taste which is developed in us, is to be transmitted to them.

Though after 1863 Tolstóy did not directly interest himself in the peasant schools, his interest in the education of the masses remained unabated, and in 1872 he brought out a series of primers for the use of country schools. In these he attempted to tell stories and give scientific information, whether of his own composition or based on borrowing and imitation, with the least literary elaboration and in the simplest language possible, so as to be adapted to the mind of the children of the masses. Among these stories are contained *God Sees the Truth, but Does Not Tell at Once* and *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, which he later, under the influence of a searching criticism of artistic productions, whether his own or of others, considered as among the few specimens of good art produced by him. Here again the reader may feel inclined to differ from the author's judgment, considering these stories for children as in no way comparable with *The Cossacks* or *The Death of Iván Ilích*. But it is the



simplicity, straightforwardness, sincerity, and, in the case of *God Sees the Truth*, the religious sentiment, which alone, according to Tolstóy, determine the artistic value of a production, and as these two stories please an infinitely greater number of men than his other writings, which are accessible to but a few, Tolstóy's valuation of his own works is not a mere freak, as has been said, but is entirely in keeping with his philosophy, which has not materially changed in the last half-century.

In 1875 Tolstóy once more reverted to his pedagogical activity by writing an exhaustive criticism of existing methods of education (*On Popular Education*). He here reiterates all his previous theories, finds that in the current school systems the whole attention is directed toward teaching the pupil what he already knows, that the German method of instruction is not fit for Russian children, and that the mechanical side of instruction predominates over the mental. He is led once more to emphasize the fundamental principle that "the only criterion of pedagogy is freedom, the only method — experience." The remaining part of the essay is devoted to a criticism of the village schools in Russia and to an analysis of how freedom in education, carried to its farthest consequences, would work in raising the mental level of the peasant population.

## VI.

THE period during which Tolstóy produced his two great novels, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénin*, was one of the tensest struggle for him. His opposition to civilization, progress, the false in art, the historical method, and his faith in the original harmony of man, the superiority of the untutored masses to the cultured classes, the freedom, not only of instruction, but also of all activities of life, tentatively striven after from his earliest youth, were now firmly established and attested by his experience with his peasants and their children. His spiritual life was permanently removed from the sphere of social forms, without as yet culminating in an abstract uniform creed. On the other hand, his happy domestic life, his pedagogical and agricultural labours, the demands of his impassioned nature, held him vise-like in the toils of the present, submerging the spiritual man in the carnal. His convictions removed him to a distant future and eliminated him from the companionship of men. His life, rooted in the present, drew him nearer to a more vigorous past, in which men were not yet affected by harrowing doubts. The two moods constantly intruded upon one another, philosophy poisoning the pure enjoyment of life, and life diverting philosophy into lower channels.

Even before this time Tolstóy had never used literature as an amusement for himself or as a means for the amusement of his readers. His literary works were the truthful reproductions of his inner experiences, though, in accordance with the artistic demands of the literary

coterie to which he belonged, he clothed these in an artistic form. When the conveyance of his convictions seemed to him to be more urgent than the conveyance of his sensations, as was the case with his pedagogical essays, and much later with his religious and social ideas, he consciously abandoned the artistic form and even neglected the literary norm in his desire to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

He had for a long time dreamed of a happy domestic life, but his marriage, though it gave him everything a man could wish for, failed to allay his doubts, which frequently verged on despair. His associations with the peasants, though they strengthened his dislike for the artificial forms of society, failed to provide him with a ready solution of the problems which had driven him back to the country. His study of history, of Greek, of the drama, to which he had recourse in the desire to widen his mental horizon, only filled him with greater contempt for the self-assertiveness of the sciences and arts, and he set out to search for a new meaning of life, one which would be independent of the vagaries of science. Tormented as he was with an unsatisfied spiritual desire, his earthly bonds evoked before him visions, such as come to the saintly hermit amidst his fasts and devotions: pictures of a happy, innocent youth, the pleasures of manly sport, the din and strife of battle.

It is this titanic inward struggle, this reaching out for a distant and impossible happiness, this clutching and hugging of an irretrievable past, this incorporeal objectivity of thought and concentrated subjectivity of feeling which was going on in him, that Tolstóy externally and internally focused in his two great novels,—externally, in the strange mixture of novel and history, of dialogue and reflection, of calm contemplation and bitter arraignment, and internally, in the strivings of his well-meaning, vacillating, temperamentally unhappy heroes, Pierre and

Levin. *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénin* are not novels of the ordinary kind, — a plot, a dose of love, a dash of wickedness, — but records of mental experiences, set off by a distressing, false, perverted reality. The reader, guided by the current idea of what constitutes a novel, is misled into believing that the plot, the love-story, the delineation of character, are the essential parts of Tolstóy's narrative, and is apt to look upon the philosophical digressions and the microscopic details of certain scenes as useless and halting incidents in an otherwise grand conception.

But the process of Tolstóy's creation is the very reverse of the one pursued by the traditional art. Tolstóy is interested in himself alone, not in the egoistical sense of self-sufficiency, but as the only safe criterion of the world outside. His own experiences, his own spiritual advancement, his own struggle with the flesh, and the ascertainment of the truth, religious, moral, social, as it appears to him, are the subjects that have interested him exclusively from the time he wrote *Childhood*, and it is only the massive power of his artistic genius, working within him in spite of himself, that causes him to clothe his autobiography, considered from various aspects, in the form of a connected story of novelistic incidents. Regarded as novels merely, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénin* lack uniformity and unity of action, but viewed as annals of life, their artistic setting and the elaboration of details add vividness and relief to the abstract striving of a searching soul. The novels, like bulbous plants, consist of a series of superimposed integuments: remove these one by one, and the pith will be reached, — the essence, and that will invariably be the author himself.

Let us take *War and Peace*. Its genealogy is interesting: Tolstóy began by investigating the history of the Decembrists, which, being the history of a revolt, was eminently adapted to his mood of revolt against the exist-

ing order. He was taken back to the beginnings of this revolt, to the troubled time of the French invasion, and to *The Year 1805*, which logically antedated the incidents he wished to develop. He had intended to work out the history of the national opposition to the political conditions of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, in order to find in them a counterpart or an explanation for his own negative attitude. Instead, he was led to study the great national struggle, the *War*, which gave him the artistic background for his novel; but he soon discovered that in doing so he was drawn away from himself to a world of struggle outside himself, and he felt constrained, after having laboriously brought Pierre, a reflection of his own inner life, out of the tangle and contention of historical forces, to return to the treatment of his inward strife, — to *Peace*. But his own struggles, at the time the novel was ended, were not complete, and so, while *War* furnishes us with a rounded narrative of historical events, *Peace*, like life itself, leaves us in the middle, after bringing us down to the period in the author's life when the literary exigencies of the novel, already overtaxed, demanded an ending.

In *The School at Yásnaya Polyána* Tolstóy tells us of his idea of teaching history in the following words: "I have also made experiments in teaching modern history, and they have been very successful. I told them the history of the Crimean campaign, and the reign of Emperor Nicholas, and the year 1812. All this I told almost in a fairy-tale tone, as a rule, historically incorrect, and with the events grouped about some one person. The greatest success was obtained, as was to have been expected, by the story of the war with Napoleon." Here we have, not only an explanation why the year 1812 was chosen by him as the central event for his novel, but also an exposition of the manner in which he treated historical incidents: they were grouped about some one person and were not

necessarily historically correct. This verdict will hold in regard to the historical background of *War and Peace*, where historical accuracy, however cautiously striven after by the author, is not to be looked for, and where incidents are grouped about Napoleon, Alexander I., Kutúzov, Pierre, as persons who are most adapted to the writer's purpose. Tolstóy has been accused of having made a number of historical blunders, and a prominent general has pointed out mistakes of a military character, such as a wrong disposition of the forces at Borodinó. It is quite likely that Tolstóy himself was acquainted with his shortcomings at the time of his writing, but that he preferred occasionally to depart from the historical truth, for the sake of a more artistic and even more philosophical treatment of his subject.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, many truths are conveyed to us by him that strike us more forcibly and affect us more powerfully than the mere enumeration of actual occurrences. If he describes battles, which stand out with harrowing vividness, he impresses us with the idea that the issue of a battle, the victory or the defeat, is frequently a matter of mere guesswork, that orders are never executed as intended, that battles never take place as planned, that personal bravery counts for little, that officers are seldom distinguished for courage. If the Sevastopol sketches filled us with horror at the recital of the deadly effect of war, the present treatment of war adds contempt for the whole so-called military science and makes us look with pity and disrespect upon the military leaders. Similarly we are made to scale down our regard for the genius of Napoleon, who is represented to us as a man possessed of petty human weaknesses and an exalted opinion of himself. For Napoleon he had the same loathing that later he expressed

<sup>1</sup> Only after this chapter was written did the translator discover Tolstóy's own statement concerning *War and Peace* (see introduction to Vol. V.), which corroborates the above mentioned opinion.

for the blasphemers of the Holy Ghost, as he could not help but think of Napoleon as the personification of violence and militarism. He is not even willing to ascribe to him any personal influence upon the eastward and westward movements of the nations, or upon the abandonment and conflagration of Moscow. If in his former sketches war was realistically painted from within, it now is divested of its last trace of usefulness and is deprived of every justification.

In a similar manner he treats the deleterious effects of the governmental power. He heaps equal ridicule upon the municipal regulations of Napoleon during his stay in Moscow and upon quarrelsome, ambitious, selfish Rostopchín, who turns poor Vereshchágín over to the fury of the mob. It is true, he depicts Alexander I. as a generous Tsar, beloved by his subjects; but there is nothing in the picture to indicate that Alexander I. was possessed of any positive characteristics, and the awe inspired by his presence reminds one of that hypnotization which later he put at the base of all governmental power. Diplomacy is by him robbed of all significance, and diplomats are either small-witted gossips or downright fools. Where he is not hampered by the national patriotism, which he, however, does not seem to share, he finds nothing attractive or excusable in the whole governmental machinery: Napoleon is a petty bourgeois, Murat a feeble, pompous prince, and the Emperor of Austria a timid simpleton; councils of war are assemblies of inept generals more concerned about personal preferments and the exactness of their military operations than about beneficial results; and life proceeds fairly well without the protection of the authorities.

In respect to society he assumes the same negative attitude as before. The higher circle which congregated at the house of Madame Scherer, the superficial society which Andréy Bolkónski shuns, the profligate set with

whom Pierre associates for a time, the temporizing and fawning Prince Vasíli and his brood of degenerate children, Héléne and her following of debauchees, are all equally intended as deterrents from that artificial world of men who constitute the upper classes of the metropolitan population. As opposed to these, he dwells with sympathy upon the well-meant, mystic activity of the Mason Bazdyéev, though the Masons at large present themselves to him as worldly men who are bent upon the advancement of their own petty purposes, and he can find even some good in the brutally despotic type of the elder Bolkónski, in whom there lies at least the germ of a sterling second generation, represented by Andréy and Márya. Above all, it is the simple-minded family of the Rostóvs, in whom he sees the prototype of his own, that rivets most of his attention.

There is probably nothing in *War and Peace* that surpasses the delicate psychological discrimination with which he depicts family groups. There is certainly an abyss between religiously fervent Márya and self-poised Andréy on the one hand, and their unyielding, tyrannical father on the other, and yet the reader feels constantly that they are the same positive characters, but under changed conditions of time. How absolutely one and the same are Prince Vasíli, with his insinuating pressure of the hand, and unconscionable, half-witted, degenerate Ippolít, and fleshly, vulgar, debauched Héléne! And who does not see the blood identity of the ingenuous family of the Rostóvs, with the good-natured father, the fond and impassioned mother, impetuous and enthusiastic Nikoláy, and childishly frank Pétya, and thoughtless and yet lovable Natásha, who later makes such an excellent mother, and even petulant Vyéra, who, under the influence of her calculating German husband, becomes a somewhat narrow-minded, but yielding wife?

All this splendid setting of history and society serves



only as a background for his hero, Pierre, who is Tolstóy historically removed. But Pierre is not all of Tolstóy. Just as in *Boyhood* and *Youth* Irténev and Nekhlyúdov represent two sides of the same man, so the sterner, more spiritual aspect of the author was depicted in Andréy Bolkónski, whose very death thoughts anticipate the later conceptions of the author himself, just as homely, patient, long-suffering, devoted Márya is an exact reproduction of his mother, of whom he knew only from hearsay. The more earthly, vacillating, helpless, earnestly striving Pierre is Tolstóy with all the complexity of his insoluble questions and contradictory sentiments. He suffers constantly, not only because he sees the vapidness of society life about him and the calamities entailed by war and the wretchedness of the peasants, but also because he vainly strives after religious and moral perfection, under the guidance of his Masonic friends, and is utterly at a loss how to help the peasants, and fails to acquire any definite habits or to find any appropriate field of action for himself. His marriage to Héléne is an utter failure, and he cannot tear himself away from that corrupt society in the meshes of which he is caught by his wife and her family. At last his salvation comes. Natásha, intended for the sterner Andréy, loses him through her own thoughtlessness, and makes a good wife for the less spiritual Pierre. In the bosom of his family, with all its petty cares and its humdrum life, he seeks oblivion from the doubts that have beset him heretofore. The novel ends where Tolstóy's own happy domestic life left him at the time that he completed *War and Peace*.

But the ideal toward which even then Tolstóy tended was neither Pierre nor Andréy, but Platón Karataév, the simple peasant of the type of Natálya Sávisna, whose life of meekness and submission to fate comes nearest to the Christian ideal preached by the Gospel. So far Platón was still an unattainable perfection, and served for Pierre-

Tolstóy as a court of final appeal in matters of conduct. For woman he establishes as the highest ideal the condition of motherhood, in which all other sides of life are lost sight of and are of little importance. His types of women are, outside of the negligible, corrupt Héléne and her like, of two classes: either the women possess the precise, single-minded, loyal characteristics of Sónya, and then, however attractive they must appear to an Anglo-Saxon, who would invariably choose them for heroines, they are declared by Tolstóy to be "sterile" and are ruthlessly cast aside; or they are temperamentally changeable and unaccountable in their affections, which are generally bestowed upon the wrong persons, but superlatively endowed with the animal instinct of maternity, to which they finally abandon themselves to the exclusion of every other sentiment. Even such is Natásha. As militarism, carnage, death are the harvest of *War*, so domesticity is the apotheosis of *Peace*, — that domesticity which Tolstóy dreamed of in the *Cossacks* and hoped for in *Domestic Happiness*.

Thus *War and Peace* is an enlarged diary of inner experiences and philosophic strivings. The chosen career of a novelist kept Tolstóy within the narrow frame of a novel, and prevented him from expatiating upon his theme in a scientific treatise, which, besides, he could not have done at that period, as his dreams, hopes, and ideas had not yet become sufficiently concrete for such an objective treatment. Viewed from the standpoint of an artistic production, *War and Peace* naturally lacks completeness; but if it is viewed as an elaboration of a diary of inner experiences, these defects vanish, and we are left to admire the many artistic details in which the novel abounds to an extraordinary degree. The vivid narration of battle scenes, the grandeur and awe of Andréy's illness and death, and the deaths of Pétya and Platón, the minute descriptions of natural scenery and of sports, in which he

always delights, the exquisite delineation of character, are magnificent mosaics in the great national epic, which throughout bears witness to the author's gigantic genius during the period of tense internal struggle toward self-perfection.

*Anna Karénin* brings us one step nearer to the author's mental transformation. His domestic happiness had not lost any of its charms and did not cease to give him a full measure of contentment; but the eternal questions demanded an answer with ever greater persistency, and to this answer Tolstóy felt himself obliged to give utterance in a novel which would represent his own state and the condition of society in a more contemporaneous form than *War and Peace*. The title of the novel is misleading, since it is not Anna Karénin who is the centre of it, but Levín. Indeed, the novel proceeds just as well without Anna as it does with her. Just as *War and Peace* began with *The Year 1805*, so the present novel was evidently intended as a portrayal of manners of society, but, as it proceeded, Tolstóy, as usual, fell back upon himself and his own inner life, which begged for expression, and the story continued to deal with Levín alone, and came to a stop when Tolstóy's own experiences did not warrant any further analysis: it stops with the day when Tolstóy wrote the last chapter, and thus is a valuable contribution to the study of the author's mental state previous to his so-called conversion.

As a mere novel, *Anna Karénin* is more perfect than *War and Peace*. The long disquisitions are avoided, and whatever didacticism there is scattered through its pages is deftly dealt out in the form of conversations. The plot itself is more uniform, and the two elements of which it is composed, the story of the fall of a woman and the autobiography of Levín, are blended together without displaying the sutures as in the older novel. Otherwise it contains the same component parts as before,—the

minute description of special incidents, such as the hunt, the races, the field work, the representation of city life as undesirable and of an activity in the country as alone worthy of man, the emphatic contempt for the professions and for so-called science and the laudation of the life of the simple peasant. The treatment of the characters is the same as before, but their modernness brings them nearer to the reader than did the historical background of the first novel.

The plot is unobtrusively told. Anna Karénin, becoming untrue to her marriage vows and allying herself with Vrónski, with whom she becomes infatuated, suffers the natural punishment for her crime, and in a moment of despair commits suicide. But the situations and the dénouement are not forced. Anna is more sinned against than sinning, for her cold, precise husband has not been able to foster love in his warm-hearted wife. Anna is not a criminal, and does not rush headlong into the commission of a breach of morality, but is inevitably drawn into the abyss by the force of circumstances. Nor is Vrónski an unconscionable wretch: his education, the levity of the society in which he moves, and his own impassioned nature cause him to enter without any pangs of conscience into a liaison with a married woman; but he is staunch to his love and would fain remain the lover he was, if Anna's jealousy and irritation did not make an understanding impossible. Anna suffers for her crime, not as a just retribution for sinning, but because the crime itself is the punishment, and the end is only the final solution of a protracted period of suffering.

Nor does the author show any greater animus against the other characters who move on a lower stage of life: Stíva Oblónski, with his infidelity to his wife, his desire to pass life without any exertion or labour, his punning in the face of the most serious circumstances, is not at all the bad man we should imagine him to be. Disputatious

Katavásov, liberal Koznyshév, punctilious Karénin, the doctor, the lawyer, though with none of these can the author agree, are delineated with the greatest fairness. As for the women, we have the same types as before: Várenka is a modernized Sónya, Kitty is no other than Natásha, and Dolly is temperamentally exactly like the mother of the Rostóvs. Again it is motherhood that is preached as the highest privilege and virtue of a woman, and the very punishment for Anna's crime consists in her being compelled to relinquish the high office of maternity.

It is, however, Levín, as formerly Pierre, who comes in for the author's fullest share of attention. He knows Levín best, and he is interested in analyzing Levín's state of mind, in order later to revert to another reflection of himself at a more advanced stage of his development. Levín, like Pierre, is awkward, frank, sensitive, fond of domestic life, and in search after truth. But he has proceeded farther in his convictions concerning the futility of participating in political affairs, is more decidedly set against city life, and finally takes refuge against his besetting doubts in faith. He tries to live a truly Christian life, but he is not temperamentally prepared to live up to his own ideals, and there are frequent reversions to his older moods. "Call it faith," he says of his own mental condition, "or not, — I do not know what it is, — but this feeling has just as imperceptibly entered through suffering and has taken up a firm abode in my heart. I shall be as angry with Iván the coachman, shall discuss as before, shall express my thoughts as inappropriately as before; there will be the same wall between the holy of holies of my soul and others, even my wife; I shall be accusing her as much because of my own fright, and then shall repent of it; I shall just as much fail to comprehend through reason why I pray and continue praying, — but my life, my whole life, independently of everything

that may happen to me, every minute of it, is now no longer senseless, as it has been, but has an unquestionable meaning from the good, which it is in my power to invest it with."

After such a confession only one of two things could have happened: either Tolstóy would in the future recant his striving after perfection, and then there would be room left for at least another great novel, or he must proceed still farther and higher along the ladder of religious evolution, where religion becomes the all-absorbing subject of his thoughts, and the novel is no longer adequate for a full expression of his profound convictions. It is the latter that has happened.

## VII.

A FEW extracts from Tolstóy's letters to Fet during the year 1879 will serve as corroboratives or correctives of the *Confession* which he published in the same year.

"In my last letter I wrote you that I should not like to return to the grave, because there would still be left my relations to God."

"God knows where my *Decembrists* are. I do not even think of them, and if I did think of them, and should write, I flatter myself with the hope that my spirit alone, of which the writing would smack, would be intolerable for those who shoot people for the good of humanity. How right the peasants and you are, in saying that the masters shoot, not for what has been taken away, but because the peasants have been taken away. But I must say, I conscientiously do not read any papers now, and I consider it my duty to turn everybody away from this deleterious habit. There sits an old man, a good fellow, in Vorobévka; he has transfused in his mind two or three pages of Schopenhauer and has sent them forth in Russian, has finished a party at billiards, has killed a snipe, has enjoyed the sight of a colt from Zakrás, and is sitting with his wife drinking delicious tea, smoking, beloved by all and loving all, and suddenly they bring in an ill-smelling, damp sheet, — it pains the hands and the eyes, and in the heart there is a malice of condemnations, a sensation of alienation, a feeling that he does not love any one, and that no one loves him, and he begins to speak, and speaks, and is angry, and suffers. That must be given up. It will be better so."

"I have not for a long time enjoyed God's world so much as this year. I stand with mouth wide open, marvelling and afraid to move, for fear of missing something."

"If I am that falcon and if, as follows from the rest, my bold flight consists in this, that I deny real life, I must defend myself. I do not deny real life, nor the labour which is necessary for the support of this life; but it seems to me that a great part of your life and of mine is filled with gratifications, not of natural needs, but of such as are artificially grafted upon us by our education and by needs invented by us and grown into a habit, and that nine-tenths of the labour put by us on the gratification of these needs is idle labour. I should like to be firmly convinced that I give more to men than I receive from them; but as I feel myself very prone to value my own work very highly and the work of others very low, I do not hope by a mere increase of my labour and a choice of harder work to convince myself that others will not be at a disadvantage in squaring up with me (I shall by all means assure myself that the work which I like is the most necessary and difficult); I should like to take as little as possible from others and to work as little as possible for the gratification of my needs, and I think that it would thus be easiest not to blunder."

"I have successfully recommended to you the reading of *The Thousand and One Nights* and Pascal; both have not exactly pleased you, but come up to your taste. Now I intend to offer you a book which no one else has yet read and which I read the other day for the first time and still continue to read and to go into ecstasies over; I hope that this, too, will be to your liking, the more so since it has much in common with Schopenhauer: this is Solomon's Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Book of Wisdom,—it is impossible to find anything more modern than these; but if you read them, read them in Slavic.



I have a modern Russian translation, but it is bad. The English translation is bad, too. If you had a Greek translation, you would see what it is."

A year later, in 1880, he wrote: "Now it is summer, and, as usual, life fills me with transport and I forget to work. This year I have struggled for a long time, but the beauty of the world has conquered me."

By this time *My Confession* was written, and the foundation was laid for the *Critique of Dogmatic Theology* and *The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated*. In view of the above extracts and of what we have learned from the analysis of Tolstóy's previous life and work, the *Confession* has to be taken with some degree of caution. There is no untruth in it in the main, but the suddenness of the religious conversion, the intensity of his despair, the salvation through faith, are all the result of a retrospective emotional attitude under the influence of the last, most potent illumination. But in reality there is nothing new or unforeseen in his new phase of life. His religiousness was expressed by him in his first production, *Childhood*, and was emphasized again and again in *War and Peace* and in *Anna Karénin*. His suicidal intentions date back to the *Memoirs of a Marker* and are touched upon in the *Cossacks* and further developed in *Anna Karénin*. His negative attitude toward civilization and progress, his opposition to violence in every form, his temperamental contempt for the lie in every shape, have always been the same. What is it, then, that took place in the year 1879 which led to his *Confession* and to the so-called second part of his life and activity that both by him and the critics are assumed to be something quite distinct from the first part?

The answer is found in the dual nature of Tolstóy; he is intensely subjective, unable at any time to get away from himself, analyzing, probing, and chastizing himself continuously, until his whole spiritual being has become

a most delicate instrument for the reception of the most advanced truths; on the other hand, or, perhaps, on account of this great receptiveness of his nature, he more than any one else appears as the product of what is best in our Christian civilization. Ever since the time of Christ, to use a paradox, the whole of Europe and the church Christianity have been vivified by that small leaven of the Gospel Christianity which through the ages has kept the world from breaking up into chaos and which from time to time has borne fruit in the creation of those dissenting sects that have sought a greater approximation with the Gospel. So, too, the best minds have constantly striven after that truth which the church Christianity has vainly tried to banish from the original precepts of Jesus. Rousseau even, with his return to Nature and his simplicity of life, represents an element of that unconscious tendency toward a primitive Christianity.

By dint of his extreme sensitiveness, Tolstóy from his earliest youth came under the influence of all the factors that made for a simple Christianity. His constitutional opposition to all the falseness in society, science, and art, his strong antipathy to violence in whatever form, his fervent desire to comprehend the cause of all causes, his religious strivings and his religious doubts alike, all of these lay in the direct line of his Christian life, without his being able to see his path ahead of him. And it is because he was unable to see the unifying principle of his disjointed thoughts and sentiments that he suffered and wavered and fell into despair. At times, indeed, it seemed to him that his opposition to the existing order was merely temperamental, and that he himself was to blame for his departures. Whenever he was assailed by this periodic doubt, he gave vent to his mood in a new literary production, in every one of which there is depicted that inner struggle which just then was going on

in him. Still he never could be satisfied, for no sooner had he overcome one period of doubt than another overcame him.

And subduing his temporary acute stages of despair, which, as he says, and as we learn indirectly from his earlier writings, led him to the contemplation of suicide, he struggled on and on. Then Schopenhauer gave him some temporary relief, for here he found many things united that in him had lived isolated. And then Solomon's Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and the Book of Wisdom, taken up by mere chance, brought him nearer to the solution of those questions which had tormented him so long. Then his previously acquired knowledge of Greek tempted him to read the Gospel, and the effect, he imagines, was instantaneous. In reality, however, it was merely the completion of the circle of his life and thought. His education, as that of all Europeans, was the result of all the palpable and also of the more remote influences of Christianity; his spiritual life had still more carried him back to the Gospel, and now the reading of the Gospel finished the circle on which he had begun.

It was not the discovery of Christ, a new Christ for him, that produced his conversion, but the discovery of the essential unity of his hopelessly disconnected thoughts. Heretofore we had the various aspects of Tolstóy as Irténev, Nekhlyúdob, Olénin, Pierre, Levín. Now it is Christ-Tolstóy that becomes the final and lasting stage of his spiritual evolution. Beyond this it is impossible to go. Christ's life of humility and brotherly love, His temptation by the devil, His persecution, His love for the lowest of humanity, — that was precisely what Tolstóy, unconscious of the mainspring of his strivings, had before him as the excelsior of his aspirations. The very so-called impracticableness of Christ's abstract truths and His momentary wavering in the garden of Gethsemane were points strikingly in keeping with Tolstóy's own

character. In so far as Tolstóy discovered this parallelism between his life and that of the teacher of Christianity, there actually began a new stage of life for him; but it was merely the discovery of what had long ago existed within him, of what gave him the positive conviction that he was marching in the right direction, even though it be toward an inaccessible height. It was this well-moored enthusiasm, this discovery of a staff and stay, this universal, all-permeating, all-true Gospel teaching that urged him on to cast aside the last reserve, to abandon every vestige of the litterateur's art, to speak out frankly and tell without artistic subterfuge what he had been hinting at and saying by implication in all his previous novels.

His career, he thought, began anew, and as *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, and *Youth* had ushered in his literary activity, so now *My Confession* was to make tabula rasa of his older life and to lay the foundation for his religious activity. But the two are essentially the same, except for the greater subjectivity, maturity, and straightforwardness of the second. Next it was necessary to do away with that illusive Orthodox theology which had tempted him to fall back upon the belief of the church and which held many men in subjection. This he did in the *Critique of Dogmatic Theology*, a work of little value for those who are convinced of the truth of Gospel Christianity or to the reader at large, but destined some day to become one of the most powerful weapons against the Greek Catholic Church in Russia. Having cleared the way in his own consciousness and having put out of combat the church, he proceeded to reestablish primitive Christianity from the four Gospels. Flushed with the enthusiasm of the new discovery and with the confidence in his self-acquired knowledge of Greek, Tolstóy set out to subject the Gospel to a thorough scrutiny. The manner in which he proceeded must appear irksome to a

student of Gospel criticism. While pretending to avoid interpretation, Tolstóy interprets as much as any commentator, and in the arbitrary rejection of what he assumes to be doubtful material he frequently oversteps the limits of the probable; nor is his knowledge of Greek such as to warrant an exact analysis of delicate linguistic points. But even then, making allowance for all possible shortcomings, his harmonization and translation of the Gospel remains an important contribution to Gospel criticism.

What Tolstóy interprets out of the Gospel is merely what he brings into it from a whole life of spiritual experiences. The central truth of the Gospel is for him contained in the Sermon on the Mount and in the dicta of Christ Himself. Most of these utterances had long formed the conscious, more frequently the unconscious, principles of his acts and thoughts. Imagining that the coincidence of his ideas with those contained in the Gospel was accidental, whereas his own world-conception had from the very beginning been in various ways influenced by it, he concluded that revelation consisted in this very coincidence of the Gospel truths with the dictates of reason, and in the reasonableness of all such tenets as had been familiar to him from the start he saw an argument for the reasonableness of the few principles which he had not thought of before. Thus, his strong dislike for violence in every form naturally made him hail with delight the simple prohibitions of the Sermon on the Mount against anger and swearing and killing, and to this he added, on the strength of the Gospel alone, the prohibition of adultery in the sense of an absolute chastity, in place of his former glorification of maternity. It is curious to note, in connection with this acceptance of the simple teachings of original Christianity, that the American sect of the Perfectionists, who singularly agree with Tolstóy in almost all his deductions from the Gospel teaching, and have in their communities lived the true Christian life, have re-

jected this one principle of ultra-chastity and have instead, again on the strength of the Gospel, extended the community of possessions to include community of wives.

Tolstóy is accused of carrying his principles, which, however, are not his, but Christ's, to impossible conclusions. The accusation is unjust. There can be no compromise in the matter of truth, and Tolstóy evolves his ideas to their logical conclusion, quite irrespective of whether they will prove impracticable, in the worldly sense of the word. If they lead to inconveniences, the trouble is not with the truths, but with our perverted life. The truths cannot be truths under certain conditions, and cease to be such when they do not adapt themselves to the present state of affairs. Either Christ's teaching is right or it is wrong. Once the justice of His teaching is admitted, there can be no cavilling with it. One may fall short of the goal, but there can be no compromise. The many opponents of Tolstóy have attacked him on the ground that his own theories are so abstract and so impossible of execution, that he himself has not lived up to them. But the opponents err egregiously. Tolstóy has never claimed to be perfect, and has distinctly pointed out in his letters and diaries that he is not a saint. Man is weak, and the very best will, in the struggle between their strongly entrenched habits and their best thinking, fall below the mark set by their own reason. A contemptible man is he who, in falling, finds a justification for his fall. This Tolstóy has never done: he has with singular courage upheld the supreme and final truth, even though it may tell against his own actions. In fact, in judging of Tolstóy's theories, which, it must never be forgotten, are Christ's and those of many other great religious teachers, we must leave Tolstóy entirely out. His theories must be judged in themselves, and not in connection with the man. They must stand or fall by themselves.

Injudicious persons have now and then addressed Tolstóy, requesting him to give his opinion on this or that aspect of public life, as though Tolstóy had any particular opinion on any particular point. All his views are merely the logical development of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and to this one must turn for the solution of doubtful questions. From this Gospel code all of Tolstóy's principles are naturally and logically deduced. The injunction of loving our neighbour as ourselves in its ultimate application leads to the equality of all men, the freedom from race hatred, the abolition of patriotism, as being a sectional feeling in which the love of our neighbours suffers diminution. "Thou shalt not kill." From this follow the abolition of war and of capital punishment, and vegetarianism. And from this, in conjunction with the prohibition against swearing, there follows the passive opposition to courts of justice and to any and every kind of government. Similarly, Christ's precept of mendicancy and thoughtlessness for the morrow leads to the abolition of private ownership and to the establishment of the Christian commune.

With these principles there can be no compromise, and all the half-measures and palliations are unconditionally rejected. Peace Congresses are abortive endeavours to regulate war; parliaments work hand in hand with the governments, and only perpetuate violence; socialism introduces a new slavery in the place of the old, and anarchism stands self-accused by its use of force to obtain otherwise desirable ends. For the same reason art and literature, as now constituted, are merely implements in the power of the rich, and as such are unconditionally condemned; progress is of questionable value, because it fails to attain the ends of the Christian religion; the professions are all equally to be rejected, for they all fail to aid the masses.

It would seem that Tolstóy in his condemnation in-

cludes everything evolved by humanity in the course of history. But this assumption is incorrect: he does not object to the acquisitions of humanity in themselves, but in so far as they act as external means for the attainment of personal well-being. To him the only legitimate purpose of man's life is the establishment of the right relation to God, that is, religion, and of the right relation to humanity at large, which arises from the fundamental principle of religion. This cannot be striven after by any of the human institutions and contrivances, but by an internal perfection,—"The kingdom of God is within you." And it is only through this internal work, through this important function of religion, that all other needs can be supplied and obtain a meaning,—“Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Thus religion, in its broadest sense of man's relation to the cause of all causes, becomes the chief and only criterion of all human acts and activities. Art, science, literature, all the social relations, have a reason to exist only if they comply with this basal demand of religion, and they are all to be condemned in proportion as they depart from this all-embracing and unifying law and serve man for his selfish ends. When art and science and all the other activities shall have become unified and religious, when in the enthronement of all of them not one human being shall suffer physically, morally, or mentally, then there will arrive the time when they will perform the functions which are proper to them, but not until then.

Like the "*Memento mori*" of the Trappist monks, "The kingdom of God is within you" from the time of the *Confession* on becomes the watchword of all of Tolstóy's ideas, and every problem that presents itself to him is answered in the light of this Gospel saying. It is the same old striving after personal perfection which characterizes Tolstóy in his earliest writings. No conversion,



no violent change has taken place in the spiritual life of the author; there is not even a new angle of vision in this accentuation of the religious side of life and of a salvation from within. There is only a logical unification of a series of revolts. Of necessity Tolstóy had to arrive in the end at what American thought, itself the issue of a series of revolts, had arrived at before him. It was the American school-books of "Peter Parley," which departed so completely from those current in Europe, that had very early in Tolstóy's career directed his attention to American pedagogical ideas, and these were again supplemented by what he later, by the courtesy of Eugene Schuyler, could glean out of American school-books. So now, when his extreme Gospel Christianity directed his attention to the most advanced revolt, political, social, religious, he found himself peculiarly in agreement with much that had been worked out in America. Indeed, as soon as his first few writings under the influence of his new fervour reached the reading public in the United States, many who felt themselves to be in full agreement with him sent him books, pamphlets, and periodicals, in which identical propositions were advanced. Thus he for the first time discovered the simple Christianity of the Quakers and the Shakers, the religious writings of Channing and of Parker, the non-resistant activity of Garrison and Ballou. Henceforth he again falls under the sway of American thought, accepting from it everything which voices the revolt in its most pronounced form. The difference between him and the American writers is only such as nationally exists between a Russian and an American.

Tolstóy's activity since his *Confession* has been principally directed toward the elucidation of all sides of life in the light of the Gospel teaching. *My Religion, Life, The Christian Teaching*, and a large number of minor articles and letters set forth his views in a more or less

detailed form, and special articles are devoted to the elucidation of his ideas concerning particular points, patriotism, morality, non-resistance, the use of a bloodless diet, abstinence from spirituous liquors, continence in the sexual relation, and so forth. These differ from similar disquisitions by other writers in that not one of them is elaborated by Tolstóy as a separate issue, but as a minor part of the same central idea,—the truth of the Gospel teaching. For the same reason he cannot find any approximate or partial truths in any of the current attempts at ameliorations, improvements, and advancements, and modern philanthropy, like many other sides of our civilization, is subjected to an incisive criticism and is found wanting in the basal principle of “the kingdom of God is within you.”

Naturally Tolstóy became interested in the Russian sects that profess a primitive Christianity, and of these the Dukhobors came in for the greatest share of his attention, as the persecutions to which they were subjected by the government demanded prompt action, to save them from utter destruction. Chiefly through his instrumentality, the Dukhobors were gathered from the various settlements within and without Russia, and were provided with means of transportation to Canada, where they were given land by the Canadian government. The letters which Tolstóy wrote concerning the Dukhobors reiterate the general statements concerning the meaning and essence of the Gospel. The letters to the Dukhobors are interesting in that they evince Tolstóy’s solicitude for the practical application of the Gospel teaching, in order to have before him a palpable proof of the truth of his contentions. Most interesting, however, are his two letters to Verigin, the leader of the Dukhobors, in that they give us an insight into a peculiarity of Tolstóy’s character which is generally overlooked by his critics.

When Tolstóy’s wholesale condemnation of art, litera-

ture, and the sciences had led Verigin to express himself contemptuously in respect to books and the use of modern inventions, Tolstóy felt himself obliged to take Verigin to task and to prove to him the usefulness and necessity of certain acquisitions of modern civilization. This at first sight looks like veering around to a contrary opinion, and similar utterances of his have been made the subject of just such accusations. But there is no contradiction in this. Tolstóy does not object to either science, art, literature, or modern inventions, but to their perversions, to their disregard of the sanctity of life and the equality and liberty of man, to their being used in the service of the few against the many. His wholesale condemnation, carried to its logical conclusion, is meant for the perusal of the thinking and educated, who are used to philosophical reasoning. There are, however, two classes of men who may be misled by his generalizations into outdoing the master, — the slavish imitators and the half-educated. To the latter belongs Verigin, and Tolstóy was compelled to emphasize to him the opposite side, the usefulness of those human acquisitions which, in their present form, he had rejected as a whole. For the same reason, though rejecting every government, he felt himself impelled to address the emperor upon the subject of reforms, by no means in the sense of a compromise, but as a minimum of a possible political platform. How far-sighted Tolstóy can be, when not dwelling upon the logical consequence of his theories, may be seen from the fact that the late Zemstvoist demands almost coincide with Tolstóy's own programme; but Tolstóy's programme is much more far-reaching, since it is not conceived in the spirit of compromise, but as the first step toward the final consummation of the Christian life.

Of late years Tolstóy has been inclined to look more for possible practical applications of his theories, instead of persisting more especially in the sphere of philosophical

deductions. Thus, though he formerly looked askance at Henry George's Single Tax, as being an external means for bringing about the eternal peace, which can originate only from within, he now gives it a more favourable place in his scheme of peasant reforms, which more than any others absorb his attention. For the labour question as a political or sociological problem he has as little use as for the socialistic and anarchistic panacea which are suggested for its solution, but the labourers are again and again addressed by him, and are admonished to rely solely on the internal reform, on the kingdom of God within them, for their future welfare, and they are advised to return to the soil, where alone they can be free. The land question, not political freedom and industrial development, is, therefore, the only burning question of the day in Russia, as it must be everywhere else, if life is to run in normal channels.

Tolstóy has not been able, in spite of his growing dislike for literature, to devote all his time to philosophical disquisitions and to pamphleteering. His artistic nature demanded its due, and at intervals he returned to his artistic productions; but never again did he for a moment forget his one aim of inculcating the truths of the Gospel teaching. His main concern has been to bring the Gospel teaching nearer to the peasants, the simple folk to whom, according to Christ, is given the comprehension of divine truths. Hence he has clothed his thoughts in the form of moral tales, legends, and fairy-tales, employing the simplest and most accessible literary means for the inculcation of Christian virtues. One of these stories, which shows the folly of the use of spirituous drinks, he has even changed into dramatic form, apparently to make it available for representation on a popular stage.

But he also wrote for an enlightened public. The ideas which he held concerning the frequently immoral effect of music combined with his newly emphasized, exaggerated

views on the sexual relations led him to present the double question in the form of a powerful psychological analysis of marital relations, with their jealousies and sexual excesses, which culminate in the murder of the guilty wife. This study, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, provoked a storm of indignation from the prudish and the hypocritical, as though Tolstóy in any shape or manner gave food for immoral conceptions. *The Kreutzer Sonata* is about as immoral as is an anatomical theatre or a museum of loathsome diseases, and certainly is as abhorrent as the latter. Besides, the idea of the immoral effect of music is as old as Plato and the Chinese sages, and the insistence on extreme chastity is quite familiar to a certain class of Americans, with whose ideas he was evidently acquainted before writing *The Kreutzer Sonata*. When, under the stress of the many attacks upon him, he wrote an epilogue to this work, he was, indeed, obliged to fall back mainly on the ideas of the American apostles of ultra-chastity. In any case, *The Kreutzer Sonata* can only have a sobering, and not an immoral, effect upon the reader.

Tolstóy's great versatility has been attested in the production of two dramas, both of them complete in themselves and well adapted for the stage. One of these, the comedy, *Fruits of Enlightenment*, is an amusing satire on the superstition of spiritualism, the inanity of society, the pompous pretence and absurdity of modern so-called science. The other drama, *The Power of Darkness*, is a much more serious production. As *The Kreutzer Sonata* depicts the effect of immoral relations upon the men of the upper classes, so *The Power of Darkness* treats with the harrowing effects of improper sexual relations upon the benighted peasantry. But it is not to the plot itself, which is worked out with wonderful realism, that the author wishes to direct the hearer's attention, but to the power of repentance, which leads Nikíta, the adulterer and unwilling accomplice in the murder of his new-born

babe, to make a clean breast of his crimes before the Christian people. Still more to the author's liking is Akím, Nikíta's simple-minded father, whose speech is barely articulated and who represents that Christian righteousness which needs no wisdom for its utterance.

Probably no other work of Tolstóy's later period has provoked so much discussion as *What Is Art?* in which he condemns nearly all modern art. The attacks which on this score have been directed against his views could have proceeded only from those who were not acquainted with his previous works, especially those that have been published since his preoccupation with the Gospel. To those who knew Tolstóy from his former writings there could be no doubt as to what his conception of art must be. Naturally religion is by him put at the foundation of art, else there is no criterion for it, just as there is no criterion for any other human activity without a correct understanding as to man's relation to God. Similarly, from Tolstóy's general dislike of everything which lacks sincerity and simplicity, it follows that he can have no use for those manifestations of the creative powers which by his canon must be considered as mere adulterations of art. That in his sweeping arraignment of modern art he may have included some really deserving productions, or may have here and there overlooked some worthy artist, does not invalidate the fact that Tolstóy has given a consistent and healthy criterion for man's higher activities, which artists would do well to keep constantly before them as their guide.

A no lesser sensation was caused among the reading public by Tolstóy's *Resurrection*, in which the author, according to the critics, outdid himself in realism and in extravagant arraignment of modern society. But that is only so on the surface. There is nothing new in his latest portrayal of the black sides of the legal system, of the state church, of penal institutions, of the government,

except that this time it is all represented in the form of a novel and that he has for the first time limned characters from the society of intellectuals, of men and women belonging to the student class, instead of delineating types from the narrower circle to which he himself belonged and from the peasant class which he knew so well. The heroine, Katyúsha, who after being seduced by Nekhlyúdiv falls lower and lower, and while being an inmate of a house of ill repute is falsely accused of murder and deported to Siberia, is drawn with the same delicacy which the author has bestowed upon his best types of women in his former writings. Nekhlyúdiv, the same autobiographic reflection as before, accidentally sits as a juror in the court trying Katyúsha for her supposed murder. He is tormented by remorse, wishes to expiate his guilt toward her by marrying her, becomes aware of the many wrongs created in the name of civilization, — of the futility of legal justice, of the criminality of private ownership, of the vapidity of society, of the indissolubleness of the marriage ties. He undergoes hardships and privations in his desire to be near Katyúsha, whom he wishes to help, and, in spite of his occasional lapses into his aristocratic habits, moves steadily toward a higher, unified world-conception. In short, Nekhlyúdiv is again a form of Tolstóy, and, like Tolstóy, he finally arrives at the solution of all his doubts in the right comprehension of the Gospel teaching.

Tolstóy's private life in the last twenty-five years need not arrest us long. He has tried to live the simple religious life, a life of hard labour. A number of ill-intentioned critics have ever been ready to find flaws in Tolstóy's private life, in order to prove the impossibility of realizing Tolstóy's precepts. But it has already been pointed out that Tolstóy has never claimed himself to be perfect, and that he merely declines to make compromises with his own conscience, even though his own practices

may not be in agreement with his better knowledge. Similarly we can dismiss the accusation preferred against Tolstóy that, in turning over his property to his wife, who also collects the royalties upon his works, he is guilty of duplicity. If he could see a better solution, he would be the first to live up to it. As it is, we must admire the man who, in spite of the eternal contradictions with which he is surrounded, still maintains the infallibility of the dictates of reason. There have, no doubt, been men who have been able much better to harmonize their daily acts with their reason, but it must be borne in mind that Tolstóy's struggle is one of gigantic proportions, since with the unbending spirit of non-compromise he unites an utter helplessness in matters of practical application, both of which are characteristic of the whole of Russian life. Nor need we dwell on the external facts of his excommunication by the Greek Catholic Church, upon the fact that but a very few of his own family follow his precepts or agree with him in theory, or upon his relations to a large number of private individuals, as these in no way alter the judgment we have so far formed concerning his life and thoughts from his writings and his previous life experiences. If Tolstóy's life was even in the first half of his literary activity fully reflected in his literary productions, it has now, since his *Confession*, been even more completely recorded in his written work. It is, indeed, the most remarkable characteristic of his maturer years that his thoughts do not belong to any one individual or to any one time, but are the eternal truths again and again repeated through the ages.

Our task is done. We have analyzed half a century of Tolstóy's activity, and have found it singularly consistent and steadily advancing toward the primitive Christianity by which it has unconsciously been influenced from the very start. Tolstóy's faults are many: he lacks the cautious training which makes a man wary and



balanced in his judgments; he frequently shocks people by his abruptness of thought and neglect of style and traditional literary forms; he antagonizes and frets and is restless. But through and above all this shine brightly the sincerity and earnestness of purpose, the broadest sympathy with humankind, the greatest altruism, an unbounded faith in the ultimate divine ends of man, a fervent religious sentiment, a titanic artistic nature, a wonderful insight into the workings of the human mind, a fearlessness which even a despotic government has not dared to challenge, though the church has anathematized him. The name of his admirers is legion, but the number of his followers is very restricted, not because his theories, that is, Christ's precepts, are difficult of execution, but because the world at large has not yet outgrown the hope and desire of an external salvation. None the less, Tolstóy is recognized as the spiritual guide of the New Russia which is to rise from the ashes of the Old, and his popularity abroad is bound to grow with the growth of brotherly love and universal peace and good-will to all men upon earth. It is said that Dante more than any other author represents the highest flower of our Christian civilization. With equal justice it may be said that Tolstóy stands for the highest aspirations of Christ's teaching, to which the world is gradually returning after nearly two millenniums.



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF  
EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF  
LEV TOLSTÓY



# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF LEV TOLSTÓY

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1828. August 28 O. S.<sup>1</sup> Count L. N. Tolstóy born.  
1831. Death of his mother.  
1837. Father's death. Journey to Moscow. Return to Yásnaya Polyána, under the guardianship of Countess A. I. Ósten Sáken.  
1840. Death of Countess Ósten Sáken, and settlement in Kazán, in the house of his aunt P. I. Yúshkov.  
1843. Tolstóy enters the Philological Department of Kazán University.  
1845. Leaves Kazán University, and returns to Yásnaya Polyána. Goes to St. Petersburg and again returns to Yásnaya Polyána.  
1848. Goes to St. Petersburg for his candidate's examination at the university.  
1851. Goes to the Caucasus, and in the fall there enters the army as yunker in the light artillery.  
1852. July 9. "Childhood" finished.  
Writes "A Morning of a Landed Proprietor," "The Incursion," "Boyhood."  
September 6. "Childhood" published, in the *Contemporary*.  
October 18. Writes plan of "Cossacks."  
1853. "The Incursion," published in the *Contemporary*.

<sup>1</sup> Dates are given in old style. Dates of writing have in this chronology been corrected according to the best information obtainable.

- Winter. Returns to Yásnaya Polyána.  
 December. Arrives at the Danube, where he joins the army.
1854. "Boyhood" published, in the *Contemporary*.  
 November. Arrival at Sevastopol.
1855. "Memoirs of a Marker," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 "Sevastopol in December, 1854, and in May, 1855," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 Takes part in the battle at the Chérnaya.  
 "The Cutting of the Forest" (dedicated to I. S. Turgénev), published in the *Contemporary*.  
 Helps writing "The 4th of August."  
 Sent as courier to St. Petersburg, after the storming of the Malákhov Hill.  
 First signing of his name in an address of leading literary men.
1856. "Sevastopol in August, 1855," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 Publication of his collected Military Stories.  
 "The Snow-storm," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 "Two Hussars," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 "A Morning of a Landed Proprietor," published in *Memoirs of the Fatherland*.  
 "Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance at the Front," published in *Library for Reading*.  
 First picture in a group of literary men (with Grigoróvich, Goncharóv, Druzhínin, Turgénev, and Ostróvski).  
 "Youth" finished in November.
1857. "Youth," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 First journey abroad (February — in Germany and Paris; April and May — in Italy; June and July — in Switzerland; July 7th — in Lucerne).  
 "Lucerne," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 August. Back to Yásnaya Polyána.  
 October and November. In St. Petersburg and Moscow.  
 Second journey abroad, to Paris and Dijon.  
 "Albert" written at Dijon.  
 Back to Russia.
1858. "Albert," published in the *Contemporary*.  
 "Three Deaths" written.  
 Opinion of 105 members of the Túla gentry concerning the allotment of land to the peasants, in the *Contemporary*, signed also by Tolstóy.
1859. "Three Deaths," published in the *Library for Reading*.

- "Domestic Happiness," published in the *Russian Messenger*.
1860. Third journey abroad.  
Meeting with Berthold Auerbach and Julius Fröbel.  
Death of his brother, Nikoláy.  
"Polikúshka" written.
1861. Visit to Italy, Paris, and London.  
Meeting of Proudhon and Lelewel at Brussels, and of Diesterweg at Berlin.  
April 25. Back to St. Petersburg.  
May 10. Back to Yásnaya Polyána.  
May 12. Petitioning the government to be permitted to open a school.  
Acting as Mediator of the Peace.  
"The Cossacks" finished.  
July. Announcement of the publication of *Yásnaya Polyána*.
1862. Publication of the *Yásnaya Polyána*, containing :  
"On Popular Education."  
"On Methods of Teaching the Rudiments."  
"A Project of a General Plan for the Establishment of Popular Schools."  
"Education and Culture."  
"Are the Peasant Children to Learn to Write from Us?"  
"The School at Yásnaya Polyána."  
Lives among the Bashkirs.  
September 23. Marriage.  
"Childhood and Youth," translated into English.
1863. Last of *Yásnaya Polyána*, containing :  
"Progress and the Definition of Education."  
"The Cossacks," published in the *Russian Messenger*.  
"Polikúshka," published in the *Russian Messenger*.  
"The Linen-Measurer" written.  
"The Decembrists" begun.
1864. First publication of his Collected Works.  
"War and Peace" begun.
1865. First part of "War and Peace" under the name of "The Year of 1805," published in the *Russian Messenger*.
1866. Views the Field of Borodínó.
1868. "A Few Words Concerning the Book 'War and Peace.'"
1869. "War and Peace" finished.  
Begins studying Greek.  
"The Primer" begun.
1871. Journey to Samára.

- "Primer," first book, printed.
1872. "The Primer" printed. (It contains the *Stories for Children, God Sees the Truth, The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, etc.)
1873. "Anna Karénin" begun.
1874. "On Popular Education," in *Memoirs of the Fatherland*. Russian and Church-Slavic "Primers" printed.
1875. "New Primer" printed.  
"First four Readers" printed.
1877. "Anna Karénin" finished.
1878. "The Decembrists" abandoned.  
"First Recollections."
- 1879-82. "My Confession" (printed abroad).
- 1880-82. "Critique of Dogmatic Theology" (printed abroad).  
"The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated" (printed abroad).
1881. "What Men Live By."
1882. "On the Moscow Census."  
"Short Exposition of the Gospel" (printed abroad).  
"Church and State" (printed abroad).  
"Letter to N. N." (printed abroad).
1884. "My Religion" (printed abroad).  
"Introduction to T. M. Bondarév's Teaching" (printed abroad).
- 1884-86. "What Shall We Do Then?" (printed abroad in separate parts as "What Is My Life?" and "Money");  
"The Death of Iván Ilích."
1885. "Neglect the Fire."  
"The Candle."  
"The Two Old Men."  
"Where Love Is, There God Is Also."  
Texts for Chapbook Illustrations.  
"Iván the Fool."
1886. "The Power of Darkness."  
"Nicholas Stick" (printed abroad).  
"What a Christian May Do."  
"Popular Legends."  
"The First Distiller."  
"To N. N. Ge's Painting."  
"Letter to a Revolutionist."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henceforth the publication of Tolstóy's works follows soon after they are written, and with but a very few exceptions only those that are published abroad are reliable.



1887. "On Life."  
 "What Is the Truth in Art?"  
 "The Three Sons."  
 "To the Dear Youth."
1888. "Linen-Measurer" printed.  
 "Walk in the Light, While Ye Have Light."  
 "Letter to a Frenchman."
1889. "The Kreutzer Sonata."  
 "Fruits of Enlightenment."  
 "The Holiday of Enlightenment."  
 "Letter to A. V. Vlášov."
1890. "Epilogue to the Kreutzer Sonata."  
 "On the Relation between the Sexes."  
 "On Non-Resistance to Evil."  
 "Why People become Intoxicated."  
 "Introduction to A. Stockham's Tokology."  
 "Apropos of A. L. Ershóv's Book."
1891. "The Coffee-house of Surat" (translated from the French of B. de St. Pierre).  
 Tolstóy's family goes to the Famine district.  
 September 19. Tolstóy grants permission to translate and reprint his works.
- 1891-93. "Articles and Reports on the Famine."
1892. "The First Step."
1893. "The Kingdom of God Is within You."  
 "The Non-Acting" (printed abroad).  
 "Introduction to Amiel's Diary."
1894. "Karma" (translated from the English).  
 "Introduction to S. T. Seménov's Peasant Stories."  
 "Introduction to the Works of Guy de Maupassant."  
 "Christianity and Patriotism" (printed abroad).  
 "Religion and Morality."  
 "Mazzini on Immortality" (translated).  
 "Letter to the Editor of the Daily Chronicle."
1895. "Epilogue to Drózhzhin's Life and Death."  
 "Master and Workman."  
 "Reason and Religion."  
 "Three Parables."  
 "Letter to a Pole."  
 "Relation to the Government and the Existing Order."  
 "God or Mammon?"  
 "Shame!"  
 "Persecution of Christians in Russia."  
 "Letter to P. V. Verígin."

1896. "Second Letter to Verigin."  
 "Letter to the Ministers."  
 "Letter on the Deception of the Church."  
 "Patriotism or Peace."  
 "Letter to Ernest Howard Crosby."  
 "Help!"  
 "Letter to the Chief of the Irkútsk Disciplinary Battalion."  
 "How to Read the Gospel."  
 "The Approach of the End."  
 "Letter to Eugen Heinrich Schmitt."  
 "Letter to the Liberals."
1897. "What Is Art?"  
 "Nobel's Bequest."  
 "Letter to the Dukhobors of the Caucasus."
1898. "Famine or No Famine?"  
 "Preface to Carpenter's Article."  
 "Carthago Delenda Est."  
 "Two Wars."  
 "An Appeal in Behalf of the Dukhobors."
1899. "Resurrection."  
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To Life and Works of Tolstóy



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## To Life and Works of Tolstóy

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ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF  
RUSSIAN WORDS





# ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF RUSSIAN WORDS

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THE transliteration of Russian words in the present translation is strictly etymological, that is, the words are rendered precisely as they are spelled in Russian, without any reference to their pronunciation. This method is the only rational one, as it is quite impossible in most cases to give a precise idea of the original pronunciation, while in some cases we get uncouth forms, such as the prepositerous ending *off*, in which some translators revel. The only exception has been made in the case of the name *Peter*, which in Russian is spelled *Petr*, to avoid the puzzling ending.

Russian pronunciation generally follows the spelling so closely that the reader will come very near the correct form if he shall give the vowels the Continental values (*a* like *a* in *far*, *e* like *e* in *bet*, *i* like *i* in *hit*, *o* like *a* in *all*, *u* like *u* in *put*, *y*, if not followed or preceded by a vowel, like *y* in *pity*), and the consonants their English values (*g* as in *get*, *kh* as *ch* in German *ach*, *zh* as *z* in *azure*, *y* before and after a vowel as *y* in *yet*).

Those who want to approximate the correct pronunciation more closely must observe these additional rules :

1. *E* and *i* sound *ye* and *yi* respectively after *d*, *t*, *l*, *r*, and *n*, and *e* sounds also *ye* after *b*, *p*, *m*, and *f*.

2. *E* beginning a syllable and in the beginning of a word is always *ye*.

3. *E* when accented generally sounds *yo*, but *o* after *sh* and *ch* (the index will indicate all the cases when *e* is to be read *yo* or *o*).

4. *O* before the accent sounds like short *ah*.

5. Final consonants sound hard, that is, *g* like *k*, *d* like *t*, *b* like *p*, *v* like *f*, *z* like *s*, *zh* like *sh*.

Thus *Andréy* sounds *Andr-yéy* (Engl. *yea*), by 1; *Rostóv* — *Rastof*, by 4, 5; *Raévski* — *Ra-yéf-ski*, by 2, 5; *Konovnítsyn* — *Ka-navn-yí-tsin*, by 4, 4, 1; *Arakhéev* — *A-rak-ché-yef*, by 2, 5. For this reason *Tolstóy's* name is approximately *Tahl-stóy*, while *Lcv* is *L-yef*, though popularly this, by 3, may be *L-yof*, and *Nikoláevich* is *N-yi-ka-lá-ye-vich*.

It may be mentioned here that the middle name generally ending in *vich* (sometimes in *ich* or *ych*) for men, and in *vna* for women, is a patronymic, meaning as much as "son of," or "daughter of," the name to which the ending is attached. It is proper form to address persons we know, not by their family names, with Mr., Mrs., or Miss attached to them, but simply by their given name and patronymic. Peasants and servants are addressed by their first name only, but if they are advanced in years, they are generally known by their patronymic alone.

The accent is in Russian quite irregular, and in proper nouns frequently puzzling. In the index the accents, now and then divergent in the text, have been given according to the best information obtainable, and in the few cases where the index differs from the text, it is the first that should be given preference.

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To Thoughts and Names in Tolstóy's Works



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Of Works and Articles on Tolstóy in English,  
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## Of Works and Articles on Tolstóy in English, German, and French

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IN 1903, the seventy-fifth year of L. N. Tolstóy's life, there were published in Russia two bibliographical works dealing with the popularity of the great Russian author. The first, *Count L. N. Tolstóy as a Universal Author, and the Diffusion of His Works in Russia and Abroad*, published in St. Petersburg by P. D. Dragánov, Assistant Librarian of the Imperial Public Library, claims to be only an extract from a larger work to be published in the future, which will treat of the translations of Tolstóy into forty-five languages. The second, *Count L. Tolstóy in Literature and Art. A Thorough Bibliographical Index to the Russian and the Foreign Literatures concerning Count L. N. Tolstóy*, by Yúri Bítovt (Moscow), which apparently intends to be complete, gives in all 4,002 numbers. This latter work, though interesting as regards the information given from Russian sources, is very far from being either exact or complete. Thus, instead of the nearly 250 numbers of German works and articles on Tolstóy and his works, collected by me, only twenty are given; a large number of translations into English, which have appeared in periodicals and cheap editions, are not mentioned; many translations into Slovak and Judeo-German personally known to me are unknown to the

author. From these facts it may be assumed that even now it would not be difficult to bring together ten thousand numbers, if not much more.

But even with the insufficient material at hand it is possible to establish certain important and curious points in the popularity of the greatest Russian prose writer. He has been translated into all the literary languages of Europe, including Karelian, Esthonian, Lettish, Lithuanian, Turkish, and Georgian. Some of his works are to be found in Arabic, Sart, Kazano-Tartar, Perso-Tartar, Cheremis, Chinese, Japanese, Armenian, Hebrew, Judeo-German, and even Esperanto. The English language leads in the number of separate pieces translated: though only 262 are given by Bítovt, it may safely be assumed that there are more than three hundred of them.

Up to the year 1900 there appeared 304 separate pieces, either complete editions, or whole works, or separate articles, in Russia alone, most of these in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Of the eighteen so-called complete editions, sixteen have been published in Moscow. These Russian publications contain all the early productions fairly complete, and, since 1880, only a few of the later works, nearly all of them curtailed and corrupted by the censor. The uncensored works frequently coursed in Russia in lithographic copies and found their way abroad, where the best texts, though not always reliable, were published by M. Elpidin in Carouge-Genève; since 1896 correct texts have been printed in England, at first in London and later in Christchurch, by Vladímír Chertkóv (Tchertkoff), Tolstóy's foreign representative. The works published abroad comprise more than half of all of Tolstóy's writings.

The present collection of works on Tolstóy, in English, German, and French, is fairly complete for the first two, less so for the French, as the bibliographies in that language are very unsatisfactory. Readers are requested

to communicate to the translator any omissions they may observe.

## I. ENGLISH

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THE END.



## ERRATA<sup>1</sup>

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Vol. IV., p. 41, l. 16, change "psalter" to "psalter."

Vol. IV., p. 221, l. 24, change "gives" to "give."

Vol. IV., p. 303, l. 36, change "goslings" to "kids."

Vol. IV., p. 304, l. 1, change "goslings" to "kids."

Vol. IV., p. 336, l. 2, change "Medans" to "Medes."

Vol. V., p. 148, l. 1, change "one but the last" to "last but one."

Vol. VII., p. 204, l. 8, change "princes" to "prince."

Vol. XIX., p. 110, the last sentence in par. 7 to read, "They are catching fire," etc.

Vol. XIX., p. 111, l. 4 in par. 9, change "surely renders" to "surrenders."

Vol. XIX., p. 185, l. 2 in par. 8, change "question" to "life."

Vol. XIX., p. 243, l. 5, add "while" before "the proprietors."

Errata in proper names are corrected in the index.

<sup>1</sup> Readers are requested to communicate to the translator any errata they may notice.







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